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# SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

## Patriot-Prophet

Dr. BHUPENDRANATH DATTA

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SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S role in the making of modern India, his early life, the social environment in which he was born, the social urges that beset his early youth are dealt with in this study. A full family pedigree and the incidents of his early life are given in consultation with the writer's elder brother Sri Mahendranath Datta.

Documentary evidences bearing the testimonies of the influence of Swami Vivekananda in awakening the national spirit are given in the text. Moreover, the works of Swamiji have been ransacked to elucidate his plans on the formation of a United India and to make Hinduism a dynamic religion that will revitalize the Hindu society. In this connection, the role of Sister Nivedita in influencing aggressive Indian nationalism and reminiscences about her are also dealt here.

It gives historical facts of the critical moments when Swami Vivekananda was born. It reveals the socio-political cross-currents in the days of his boyhood and early youth. The life work of Swamiji has been discussed in these pages from the historical-dialectic-materialistic standpoint. It is a study of his life and activities from a new angle of vision.

*( Continued )*

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# PATRIOT-PROPHET

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SWAMI VIVEKANANDA
Cairo, November, 1900

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# SWAMI VIVEKANANDA
# PATRIOT-PROPHET

*A STUDY*

*by*

BHUPENDRANATH DATTA, A.M. (Brown); Dr. Phil. (Hamburg)

অরেঞ্জ লাইব্রেরী।
পুস্তক বিক্রেতা।
২১৩ শ্যামাচরণ দে ষ্ট্রীট,
(কলেজ স্কোয়ার) কলিকাতা-৭৩

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*To my mother*

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# PREFACE

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA PATRIOT-PROPHET—The book is a study of Swami Vivekananda in relation to national problems. This study contains Swamiji's views regarding national reconstruction of India and the part played by him in its great reawakening. The basis of this study is the dialectical analysis of the Indian society of the nineteenth century.

Here, it should be acknowledged that all the family incidents and the incidents of the early life of Swami Vivekananda, have been put down in the book after consultation with the writer's elder brother, Sri Mahendranath Datta.

The writer owes his great debt of gratitude to Brahmachari Amar Chaitanya of Ramakrishna Vedanta Math for helping him in everyway for the publication of the book. He also owes thanks to the Ramakrishna Vedanta Math, Calcutta, for putting at his disposal all the literature dealing with the Ramakrishna movement for perusal.

Again, his thanks are due to the Trustees of Prabuddha Bharat, Mayavati, for their kind permission granted previously to the writer to quote the writings of Swamiji.

Here, the writer, also expresses his thanks to those who in various ways have helped him in bringing out the book.

3, Gourmohan Mukherji Street
Calcutta-6
October 1, 1954

Bhupendranath Datta

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## FOREWORD

The influence of Swami Vivekananda in the mind of nationalist India is well-known. Five decades ago, his Indian lectures collected in book form entitled "From Colombo to Almora" became the source of inspiration to many a youth. His words "Heaven is nearer through football than through Gita. We want men of strong biceps" became the slogan of the ardent youthful nationalists of that time.

Indian Nationalism as understood by Swamiji is not the same as understood to-day. To him, a nation meant the people. He wanted the upliftment and freedom of the Indian people. He wanted the material and moral advancement of the same. By the word "people" he did not mean a political term, but the masses who constitute the major portion of humanity living in India. In reading the sayings of Swamiji quoted in this volume the reader will find that he has divided the Indians into two classes, the rich—the upper class, and the poor—the lower class. This latter class he has designated as the "masses". They form the toiling classes of India. Swamiji's efforts were directed in drawing the attention of the youth of the country towards the betterment of the condition of the masses. He has not only repeatedly asked them to take up this onerous task but he has laid down the principles of his program also. But how many have realized what he has said and how many have acted up to it?

It seems that the youth of the country did not realize the full import of his advice in this matter. To them Swamiji's plea for upliftment of the Indian masses meant only philanthropic and charitable works. Hence the country is dotted with Social Service Societies! But if any one reads his advice in the light of modern philosophy for the upliftment of the masses, he will find that Swamiji was not content in giving an ameliorative program only, he also wanted a radical cure

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of the chronic condition. He was not for keeping up the *status quo* of the Indian Society, but wanted a complete overhaul of the whole thing!

A Marxist will be amazed in seeing his ideas anticipated in the sayings of Swamiji, and he will be more amazed when he reads that Swamiji has openly called himself a "socialist". Therein lies the key to Swamiji's advice to the youth of his country. One will be surprised in reading that Swamiji has not only used Marx's phrase, that "the poor are getting poorer and the rich are getting richer" but he has also spoken about the "proletarian culture", and has foretold that the "Proletocult" (Proletarian Culture) of the Indian masses will be the future culture of New India! In going through the pages of this book one cannot but admit that Swamiji was saturated with the ideas of the social-revolutionaries of the West. Indeed he gave evidence enough that he was well acquainted with their literature and ideals.

To many an admirer of Swamiji this will sound quite strange and unorthodox. Some will call it a blasphemy even. But truth is stranger than fiction. Some part of his life is not known to the Indian public. Very few people know that he had political revolutionary ideas in the beginning. He wanted to free the country from the foreign yoke. But he failed in his attempt, and seeing the cause of his failure, he tried a different remedy and deflected his attention to another channel. The key to the new venue of his work for India lay here.

The year before his death, when two of his foreign admirers (one of whom was his disciple) with the collaboration of some noted citizens of Calcutta started a nationalist group, which later on became the nucleus of the later revolutionary movement of Bengal, Swamiji desisted his disciple from joining it. On being asked by the Sister Christine as to why he requested the other one to keep aloof from Indian politics, he answered, "What does Nivedita know of Indian conditions and politics? I have done more politics in my life than she! I had the idea of forming a combination of Indian princes for the overthrow of the

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foreign yoke. For that reason, from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin I have tramped all over the country. For that reason I made friends with the gun-maker Sir Hiram Maxim. But I got no response from the country. The country is dead". And he narrated further attempt of his at this time in other direction; but he again said, "India is in putrifaction. What I want to-day is a band of selfless young workers who will educate and uplift the people." Swamiji narrated further of his doings to Sister Christine. But she refuged to divulge it to the writer.

Here it should be mentioned that the news about the attempt at revolution on the part of the Swamiji was not unknown to the leading revolutionaries of the first batch. It was narrated by the Swamiji himself in the course of a dialogue with Pandit Sakharam Ganesh Deuskar at Belur. Pandit Deuskar himself was an active member of the revolutionary party. On being interrogated by Deuskar regarding the future of the country Swamiji answered: "The Country has become a powder magazine. A little spark may ignite it, I will see the revolution in my life time." On being asked as to the nature of this revolution, whether the Indians will seek foreign help, he answered, "No, the Indians will not make mistake the fourth time. I know several princes who can successfully carry on the revolution." Later on, this conversation was divulged by Deuskar to the leading Bengal revolutionaries in about 1904 A.D. This news about Swamiji's attempt lent further strength to them.

Thus, the key-note of his attitude towards the Indian national question was to uplift the Indian masses by educating them, and by instilling the feeling of man-consciousness in them. What he wanted was to give a background to the process of nation-building. On this account he emphasised education for the masses and to help "to develop their lost individuality". He clearly discerned that without the uprise of the majority of the population of India who are lying in a debased condition, Indian regeneration is not possible. Swamiji was clear in his vision that our degradation is not due to political enslavement, but loss of all round

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freedom of the man from time immemorial. That religious, social and economic slavery have dehumanized the Indians, was the burden of his theme for India's upliftment. For that reason he wanted the disturbance of the *status quo* of the Indian society as can be gleaned from his sayings when he depicted the same as "horrid, diabolical", and as a remedy he said, "No priestcraft, no social tyranny! More bread, more opportunity for everybody!"

Swamiji called himself a socialist, and so far it is known, he was the first Indian to designate himself as such. Yet his socialism is not of the same brand as of to-day. In making an analysis of his sayings a Marxist may say that his "Socialism" does not tally with that of Lenin, and may fall short of the socialist ideal of the West; his was more of the reformistic school. Yet one must not forget that during the time when Swamiji penned these epistles, Socialism did not take a revolutionary attitude. The only exception to it was in Russia, where in the *milieu* of that country it could not be otherwise. But the Bolshevists had not arisen as yet, and the world had not heard anything about the theory of "Dictatorship of the Proletariate". But strange as it is, in referring to his saying quoted from page 401 (IV) one will find that Swamiji did foretell about the dictatorship of the proletariate when he said, "Yet, a time will come when there will be the rising of the Sudra class.....a time will come, when the Sudras of every country.....will gain absolute supremacy in every society". It will sound still strange when one hears what is narrated to the author by Swamiji's American disciple Sister Christine, that "it was in New York during Swamiji's last visit to America he told us these things. Swamiji was walking up and down the floor and saying—first comes the rule of the Brahmans, then the rule of the Kshatriyas. At present the world is being ruled by the Vaishyas. Next comes the rule of the Sudras. I am wondering where the first *Sudra State* will be established. It must be either in Russia or in China. In both these countries the huge masses of peoples are oppressed and down-trodden".

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To an Indian fed with the cud of antiquated English ideologies and antediluvian world-views of his own country this will sound strange, and to many an Occidental this will sound queer when he remembers that Karl Marx in his lifetime has said that the cause of freedom of the Russian people was a hopeless one. But more than half a century ago, Swamiji prophesied about the uprise of the Russian masses, and the possible establishment of the rule of the same! And the difference of opinion lay in the uphill work of the Russian Youth during the time that intervened between the sayings of these two great men. Marx knew Bakunin sometime as his colleague, sometime as his antagonist. At that time, the movement of freedom of the Russian people was in its infancy. It was confined to some sporadic terroristic attempts of the students. There was no mass movement in Russia at that time. Hence Marx was in despair. But when Swamiji was in the West, Peter Kropotkin was living as an exile in London (Swamiji met Kropotkin at the Paris International Exhibition) and Plekhanoff's party was very active in the field, though Lenin had not seceded from the latter as yet. Nobody knows what conversation took place between Swamiji and Kropotkin at Paris. They met only once at the same place. But some of Swamiji's Occidental disciples were ardent admirers and friends of Kropotkin. They always talked of the latter to the author. But it cannot be said that Swamiji was influenced by Kropotkin in his conversation. Yet one must realize that Swamiji had extensively travelled over the civilized world, and had met savants of different shades of ideals. Hence it was not a wonder that he was alive to the problems of modern world and would see the problems of his own country in that light.

Those of our fellow-countrymen who have been so long chewing the cud of mid-Victorian ideologies and have been importing the class-patriotism of British capitalist class known as "Nationalism" as the cure-all of India's woes, might have taken a lesson of what he had said regarding the Indian situation. To them his sayings are pregnant with meanings because his name is

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being exploited in many fields of Indian activities. Those of the Indian nationalists who exploit Swamiji's name for "Indian Nationalism" must take a heed of what he has said regarding India's problems. Swamiji has denounced the exploitation of the Indian masses by the aristocrats and he has called the arguments of those who believe in keeping the masses down, as "demoniacal and brutal." He said that "the first step to become a patriot" is to feel for the starving millions. Again he emphasized that there should be "no privilege for anyone, equal chance for all. The youngmen should preach the gospel of social raising up, the gospel of Equality". But to those who shout for freedom, yet deny it to others, he has said, "Our young folks make meetings to get more power from the English. None deserves liberty who is not ready to give liberty." The class-character of our patriotism was unmasked by Swamiji long ago!

That Indian nationalist movement has been a class movement, cannot be gainsaid. It has been the movement of the Indian Bourgeoisie to get the political control of the country. But Swamiji was explicit in his opinion that thereby the condition of the Indian people will not be bettered. Without the raising up of the masses on the basis of equality, the majority of the Indian people will remain where they are from time immemorial as "hewers of wood and drawers of water" to use Swamiji's own expression. Up to the time of independence, the nationalist movement had been a reactionary one—it demanded political freedom only. It had been reactionary in other aspects of life; so long it did not say anything about social, religious and economic freedom of man's life. But Swamiji, demanded an all-round freedom of man. He wanted liberty in all aspects of man's life.

Those nationalists who in their hatred of British rule have hated everything that is foreign, and have thought that the institutions of their own country are the best in the world and have exploited Swamiji's name in this field, take a heed of what he has said: "Modern India admits spiritual equality of all souls—but strictly keeps the social difference". "A country where millions of people live on flowers of the *mahua* plant, and a

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million or two of Sadhus and a hundred million or so of Brahmins suck the blood out of these poor people,.....is that a country or hell? Is that a religion, or the devil's dance?"

Again, those who think that Swamiji has talked of spirituality and spiritual civilisation of India only, take a lesson of what he has said in this matter. He said, "we talk foolishly against material civilization....Material civilization, nay even luxury, is necessary to create work for the poor." Swamiji was not dead to the fact that without satisfaction of material wants, higher thought and ideal cannot develop, therefore he said, "I do not believe in a God who cannot give me bread here, giving me eternal bliss in heaven!"

In gleanings over his sayings one will clearly grasp that Swamiji was opposed to exploitations of all kinds. He was the first Indian to discern that our so-called religiosity and patriotism has taken the shape of exploitation! He has denounced the class-character of our civilization, and as a remedy wanted to educate, and uplift the masses on the basis of equality, because in them he saw, lies the hope of India. Farther, as the means of building up a New India, he has preached that "Proletocult" will create a new Indian Nation. That future India will not be a sectarian one, but it will rise on the basis of a new culture evolving out of the psychology of the masses was predicted by him long ago. Therein lies our hope for the future. The only practical way to unite the masses of divergent sects and communities in a homogeneous body, is through a new culture which will not bear any class or communal character, but will evolve out of the psychology of the masses as the solution to the complex communal and sectarian questions that have been tearing asunder India of modern time.

Finally, Swamiji has expected much from the Youth of India! and in addressing the young men of his own province he has said, "You, young men of Bengal,.....come up, you can do everything and you must do everything."

The youth of India are awakening, and are getting alive to the national questions. Different forms of ideologies are

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being put in the melting pot. India is passing through a period of intellectual transition. It is high time that the youth of the country should awake to the new consciousness of having a new world-view, and see Indian problems from new angles of vision. If the Indian youth wants liberty for himself, he must give it to others. If he aspires for freedom, he must want it in all spheres of his life. If he wants to serve his country, he must serve the chronic poverty-stricken teeming millions of beings who constitute the majority of his fellow-countrymen as Swamiji has said, "The only hope of India is from the masses." Swamiji's sayings once inspired the patriotic-minded youth of India. May his sayings about their duty inspire them to do further service to that one-fifth of humanity which so long lay enfettered and exploited in India! May the new line of work for the masses as advised by Swamiji further the cause of his country so that his prophecy about the Russian and Chinese masses may be fulfilled in India too in the course of time.

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# SWAMI VIVEKANANDA—PATRIOT-PROPHET

## INTRODUCTION

The book entitled "Vivekananda the Socialist" was written at the request of the writer's young comrades of the youth movement that was in full swing in Bengal in 1928-29, to guide them in their work. As Swamiji's sayings were the sources of inspiration to the young revolutionaries of Bengal and outside during the days between 1902-1916, so Swamiji's utterances and exhortations to the youth of India to work for the masses and to uplift them, may guide the youthful workers in the labor and peasant fields.

With this object in view, his sayings appropriate to the work of the mass movement were collected and put together in the form of the above captioned book. Further, it was directed by the writer that the sale proceeds of the book would go to the Khalispur Swaraj Ashram, Krishi Fund, District Khulna. But the said Ashram has been disestablished long ago, and the district of Khulna has now become a part of East Pakistan, a separate state. Moreover, the book has gone out of market.

The name of the book provoked ridicule amongst some of the old folks who regarded Swamiji as only a mystic and a Hindu revivalist of the orthodox pattern. Only it created a *furore* amongst the youthful workers in the field of mass movement. They found a support in him in their work as the national revolutionaries drew their inspiration from him in the former decades. In the course of time the book made its mark on the public mind. The "Introduction" was translated in Bengalee and published in a Bengalee monthly magazine named *"Bharat,"* now defunct. Moreover, there was a demand for the book from all parts of India. As a result, the book went out of market long ago. But there is a constant demand for it. On this account, the writer's

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friends have urged him to revise the book and to give an exposition of Swamiji's sayings in the present context of independent India.

Originally, the book was written to inspire the workers in various national fields striving for the independence of India. But today India is an independent democratic republic. India that is Bharat, is now a secular state and as such, is making its mark in the world politics. But inside Bharat there is a confusion in the matter of national ideal. Everyone is at a loss to give a clear conception of New Bharat that is in making. Some say we must go back to the good old days of the past, some say she must be a *replica* of Soviet Russia, some want to imitate the U.S.A. etc. As an aftermath of the confusion, Mahatma Gandhi, the father of the new Indian nation had to lay down his life in the hands of a political fanatic.

Confusion is still going on and party wrangles are hindering the progress of free India. Dialectical contradictions in historic-materialistic field of free India are preventing the emergence of the form of the new India that is in making. Instead of India one and indivisible, we got a partition of the motherland. Gandhi's dream of Ramraj (whatsoever it might have meant) gave place to a democratic republican state. Again, in the name of democracy, bourgeois-democracy is established which again in practical field is evolving into Plutocracy i.e. the rule of the capitalist class. Thus the trails of dialectical contradictions of Historical-Materialism is clearly discernible in the zigzag course of the politics of present-day India.[1]

Here, the utterances of Swamiji *a propos* his vision of a future new India are put before the workers to inspire them in the matter of nation building. It is hoped that irrespective of dogmas and creeds imported from outside, his advices will clear the blurring vision of new Bharat. In this matter, the worker will see that the ideal is lying nearer at home than seeking from outside for it.

Now-a-days, the youngmen imbued with a smattering of Marxism

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1. Dialectics moves in a zigzag curve. McTaggart speaks the same thing. It moves in a spiral way according to Lenin.

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call him a "reactionary". In his life time the social-reformers of the day called him a reactionary as well; because he did not advocate that only by giving widows to remarriage or by making some inter-caste marriages and suchlike social reforms India's regeneration would be achieved. To him that was not the crying need of the time. The desideratum according to him is to raise the masses, to educate them and to elevate them in the scale of advanced humanity.

In his travels all over India the thing that struck him most was the grinding poverty of the masses and their degradation. Yet, none of the reformers and politicians aspiring political rights from the hands of the British rulers, condescended to look after their interests. Hence, he cried out, "Do you feel that millions and millions of the descendants of gods and of sages have become next door neighbours to brutes? Do you feel that millions are starving for ages?"—(*My Plan of Compaign*). Again, he says, "With all boosted education of modern times, if anybody says a kind word for them, I often find our men shrink at once from the duty of lifting them up, these poor downtrodden people. Not only so, but I also find that all sorts of most demoniacal and brutal arguments culled out from the crude ideas of hereditary transmission and other such gibberish from the western world, are brought forward in order to brutalize and tyrannize over the poor, all the more."[2] (*The Mission of the Vedanta*). Again, as an admonition he says, "Aye in this country of ours the very birth place of the Vedanta, our masses have been hypnotised for ages. To touch them is pollution, to sit with them is pollution. Hopeless they were born hopeless they must remain." Finally he gives his program: "But above all, let me once more remind you that here is need of practical work and the first part of that is, that you should go to the sinking millions of India, and take them by the hand." (*The Vedanta*). Further in order to explain this program, he says, "A hundred thousand men and women fired with the zeal of holiness....will go over the length

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2. At the time of Swami Vivekananda, articles used to be published in the papers justifying caste-system in the name of science, and untouchability has always been supported in the name of "Karma" dogma by the conservative peoples.

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and breadth of the land, preaching the gospel of salvation, the gospel of help, the gospel of social raising up—the gospel of equality."[3]

In order to elucidate his program he says, "The only hope of India is from the masses. The upper classes are physically and morally dead"[4].

Do these utterances sound like reactionary ones? Progress and reaction are relative terms. It is clear to a dialectician that a social or political stand of one age becomes an obstacle to advance in the next epoch, as phenomena cropping up in the new age contradict the previous stand. In Indian history of the period, youngmen educated in occidental learning and flushed with the new light began to compare their society with the occidental one, and found that the Indian society was at a much lower level than the former in the matter of some social institutions. They found out that in the name of religion and religious sanctions gross superstition, priestcraft, meaningless rites and ceremonies were reigning supreme in the minds of men and society. In the name of Holy Scripture, wanton brutalities were being perpetrated on widows. These were the antitheses to the real scriptural injunctions.

Human society is based on economics. With economic advancement society progresses. It changes its institutions according to its economic progress. Thus we find that in the first period of the nineteenth century as antithesis to the old caste-ridden and feudal society, a new class, the Bourgeoisie has taken its rise. The rule of English East India Company evolved the middle class in the country. As Bengal was the first place where British rule was established, a socio-economic change took place in the old moribund Hindu society. A middle class took its rise first in this province. Again, as the Hindus were the first to welcome the occidental system of education, naturally, the educated men of the period flushed with the new light penetrated through the darkness around them. They found out that crass superstition, meaningless rites are reigning supreme in the name of religion.

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3. "The Life", Vol. IV. p. 180.
4. "Works of Swami Vivekananda", Vol. V, p. 81.

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And these are paraded to have scriptural sanctions. The cruel and inhuman rite of *Sati* which had an economic motive behind it, was foisted on the superstitious and deluded peoples as sanctioned by the *Veda*—regarded by the Hindus as the revealed Scripture.

As the impact of new economic conditions on the old society, gave rise to new socio-economic phenomena the rise of the Bourgeoisie, likewise, the impact of new education on the stagnating mind, gave rise to the contradictions that resulted in engendering new phenomena in the society. The educated hence liberal section of the newly arisen Bourgeoisie looked askance and said, "What is going on in the society in the name of religion?" Thus it led them athinking. The enquiring mind of the liberals soon found out that what is passing on as religion and religious sanctions are contrary to the scriptures. The Rig-Veda has been forged to give a sanction to the economic need of the vested interests euphemistically called—*Sati*. Again, in the name of the Veda and other scriptures crass superstitions and rites are prevalent. The ignorant and unscrupulous priesthood was exploiting the deluded peoples to utmost extreme. What Swamiji called "Hideous Vamachara", was reigning supreme among the upper classes. Songs used to be sung that the "Veda calls you a three-eyed one"! Sakti puja was supposed to have been sanctioned in the Rig Veda. They called a Sukta of the Rig Veda as the "Devi Sukta". The situation has been pithily described by Swamiji himself: "A country where millions of people live on flowers of the mohua plant. Is that religion or the devil's dance"?

This sad state of things in the moribund society gave rise to the historical-materialistic contradiction in the shape of the rise of liberal bourgeoisie. The dialectics of the time gave rise to Ram Mohan Roy and his associates. It is this group that heralded the new awakening of Bharat. This class started the ball of Renaissance rolling. Hence, aptly Ram Mohan has been called by Swamiji as, "the first man of new regenerate India"[5], others

5. Letter sent to late Umesh Ch. Datta on the occasion of Ram Mohan Roy anniversary, held in the hall of the City College before the death of Swamiji.

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called him the "Prophet of New India". Of course, he was not only the first man but also the prophet of New India that was in making in the nineteenth century. Long ago before the advent of Ram Mohan Roy in the public field, a group of liberal men in Calcutta formed themselves into a committee to persuade the newly made widows not to burn themselves to death in the funeral pyre of their husbands. Brahman pandits of the committee used to visit the burning *ghat* where cremation takes place to dissuade the widows that "sati" i.e. the burning oneself in the funeral pyre of her husband is contrary to the scripture.

Thus, contradictions in the mind of the liberal bourgeoisie engendered religious reforms which further gave rise to social reforms. The more the bourgeoisie broadened its base, the more it got liberal education, the more it came to the conclusion that child-marriage, enforced widowhood of girl widows, *kulinism* i.e. polygamy among some Brahmans socially called 'kulins', invidious distinction called caste-system are derogatory to the growth of a healthy society. The liberal bourgeois class led by Ram Mohan Roy was imbibing the spirit of the French Revolution, it was watching the national struggle of the Italians, it has heard that Greece has already become a free nation. The impact of these spectacles was hammering the minds of the cultured men. But political fight with alien rulers was not thought of in those days. The newly evolved Indian bourgeoisie was bound with the fortunes of the alien ruling class. The new economic conditions are engendering the new phenomenon in the Indian society—the evolution of the middle class. Hence any talk of political right leading to political reforms or freedom was out of the horizon of the thought of the Indian bourgeoisie. The awakened section of the middle class felt the hurdles that were before them as impediments to the upward trend of the national progress. Hence they began to busy themselves firstly with religious reforms, and later on with social reforms. We must understand clearly the dialectical contradictions in the historical-materialistic field of India that led to the reform movements.

But these agitations were not the end of the progressive movement that has been started in the beginning of the nineteenth century. The force of Dialectical-Materialism impelled the

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Indian society to advance further and further, till the radical section of the middle class landed in the fight for political rights.

But strange to say, the reformers of all sorts did not care to enquire about the condition of the people at the bottom of the society. Long ago[6], Rev. J. Long, in his Report of the Sociological section of the "Bethune Society" in April 26, 1861, circulated among the members, a *questionnaire* in which among other questions has asked the following: "In England much interest has been taken in the working classes as the great pillars of the social system. My own experience leads me to the conviction that in the present state of things, the working classes afford fine field for education and social improvement". Then he asks: "Do any of the working classes meet for combination to keep up wages, as the Ryots have with respect to Indigo"? Then he asks, what leads to the rise of the middle class"?

Again, about the same time, the secretary of the same society, late Kailas Chandra Basu, said in his speech at Uttarpara Library, that Bengal cannot prosper unless the economic condition of the peasantry is betterred[7]. But the Bourgeoisie did not interest itself to this call. It fell in the deaf ears of the rising middle class which was augmenting its number under the shelter of colonial-imperialism of Great Britain. Who cares for the lower classes when the middle class is getting prosperous and increasing its strength by collaborating with the Imperial bourgeoisie. Class-character is to be discerned in this attitude. Indian bourgeoisie was then loyal to its counterpart, the Imperial bourgeoisie whose helping hand was making it stand on its legs.

But when the Indian Liberal Bourgeoisie came to politics, it did not demand freedom and liberty from foreign yoke as its ideal. At the time of Swamiji it was only demanding a few

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6. Vide: "The Proceedings of the Bethune Society" for the sessions of 1859-60, 1860-61, p. 443.
7. Vide: Manmatha Nath Ghose: "*Purana Katha*" (in Bengalee).

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privileges and concessions[8]. Dialectical contradictions were not ripe for a fight for freedom at that time.

It is no wonder that in this period Swamiji said, "Alas! nobody thinks of the poors of the country. They are the back-bone of the country, who by their labor are producing food.....But there is none to sympathise with them, none to console them is their misery"[9].

Again in the advanced mind of Swamiji, dialectical contradiction to the *status quo* of the Indian society has aroused the consciousness in him that without freedom of the people there cannot be any solid progress. Thus he says, "Now the question before us is this: There cannot be any growth without *liberty*. Our ancestors freed religious thought, and we have a wonderful religion, but they put a heavy chain on the feet of society, and our society is in a word, *horrid* diabolical. In the west, society always had freedom, and look at them. On the other hand, look at their religion. Liberty is the first condition of growth, just as man must have liberty to think and speak, so he must have liberty in food, dress and marriage and in every other thing, as long as he does not injure, others"[10]. Does this utterance sound reactionary and counter-revolutionary? It is clear from his saying that Swamiji is for the overthrow or the *status quo* of present moribund Indian society, and advocates social freedom. Sister Nevedita also testifies that Swamiji wanted a complete change of the society[11].

Again summing up the Indian conservative attitude of life, he says, "We talk foolishly against material civilization. *The grapes are sour*.....No priestcraft, no social tyranny![12]

Does this evaluation of the conservative Hindu mind and castigation of priestcraft and of the so-called political reformers sound any way like that of a counter-revolutionary? Who has had

8. Vide the earlier lectures of the national leaders in the History of the Indian National Congress.
9. "Conversations and Dialogues." Works of S. V. Vol. VIII. pp. 243-244.
10. Works: Vol. IV, pp. 312-313.
11. Vide Nivedita: "The Master as I saw him".
12. Works: Vol. IV, p. 313.

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then the boldness to say that he "does not believe in God who cannot give his daily bread?" In this terse saying did he not anathematise the current notions about religion and priestcraft? Then, did he not in this pithy saying gave the lie to those who say that Swamiji only talked about the otherworldliness of the Hindus. On the other hand, the notorious 'Sedition Committee Report' said, "His writings and teachings have deeply impressed many educated Hindus".

Swamiji's direct political attempts during his wanderings all over India has been delineated in the 'Foreward' of the first edition. In this edition something else *a propos* new independent Bharat is to be discussed. It has been said already that failing to move the Indian notables to work for the freedom of the country, he turned towards the masses. Empirical knowledge taught him the bitter lesson that India's salvation lies in the hands of the masses. Hence he says, "Secondly, as I have written before, I do not expect anything from the rich people of India. It is best to work among the youth in whom lies our hope patiently, steadily and without noise"[13]. And this exhortation bore fruit in Bengal and elsewhere. It was the youth of Bengal[14] that after his demise in 1902 A.D., began to work for the freedom of the country, "patiently, steadily and without noise."

The middle class has been the dominant force in the society in British India. Hence historical-materialistic forces of the society impelled the youth of the middle class to hearken to Swamiji's call to work. Dialectical contradictions in the society made the members of the upper bourgeois class to gravitate towards the Indian National Congress which was then an extremely moderate and a vegetating organization. Dialectics of the time made the rich men extremely loyal and the prosperous members of liberal bourgeoisie moderate in their demands for loaves and fishes from the table of the imperial masters. On the other hand, the petty-bourgeoisie i.e. the members of the

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13. Vide Vol. IV, p. 415.
14. In this connection see the statement of late Satis Chandra Bose, the founder of "Anushilan Samiti" in writer's Bengalee book entitled "The Second War of Independence".

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lower middle class was restless. The educated section of the lower middle class was desirous for a change. The competition in life was too keen amongst them. They wanted freedom as the remedy. The mainsprings of the class movements in India are clearly discernible through the eyes of economic interpretation of India. Swamiji appealed to the youth and they responded to his call.

Momentous things happened in Bengal after Swamiji's demise in 1902. A concatenation of circumstances made Sister Nivedita meet Aurobinda Ghose in Baroda who communicated to him the political trends in Bengal. This made Aurobinda visit Calcutta and the nucleus of the revolutionary movement was started there. The Executive Committee of the revolutionary society that was established at Calcutta, had among its five members, Aurobinda and Sister Nivedita as well. This society in Bengal was said to be connected with the "Secret revolutionary society" established in Maharastra by B. G. Tilak and his associates.

It was no wonder that dialectical contradictions working in historical-materialistic field of India were preparing the ground for a militant Nationalism, the ultimate aim of which was the resuscitation of the national life and the emancipation of the motherland from foreign yoke. The middle class was getting militant. The delusion caused by the attacks of the reformers and the diatribes of the Christian missionaries are beginning to pass away. The Hindu revivalists and the Theosophists had some hands in the reawakening of the Indian mind. It is true that the reform movements had enlivened the stagnant society. The sledge-hammers that fell on the moribund society from the east and the north[15] aroused the sleeping society. Swamiji himself has said that, "those galvanic shocks aroused the sleeping leviathan[16].

The whole national phenomenon of the time can be illumined from the extant religious parable that a lion rescued a lion-cub by disillusioning it about its racial identity.

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15. Swami Dayananda's movement.
16. Works: Vol. IV, p. 293.

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Similarly, at this juncture Swamiji gave clarion-call to delve into India's past history and to find out the history of race-achievement of the forbears. He called the Indians, *Aryas* and asked them to find out the achievement of their forbears in the past. He asked the Indians to tear off the veil of national ignorance that has enveloped them. Thus he says, "A cloud of impenetrable darkness has at present equally enveloped us all. Now there is neither firmness of purpose, nor boldness of enterprise, neither courage of heart, nor strength of mind....Civilization is base imitation of foreign nations"[17].

Swamiji knew that of all the foreign conquests of India, the English conquest has worked havoc mostly in the intellectual field. Macaulay's prophecy has been fulfilled in the case of the English educated men of India. The British rule made the intellectual conquest of India complete[18]. We are not yet able to get rid of mid-victorian ideologies! The defeatist mentality is regarded by us as natural state of mind.

Against all these delusions Swamiji raised his voice. But it was a cry in the wilderness in that time. He was head above shoulders in comparison with the intellectuals of his country at that time. Still he leads them in general matters concerning the ancient cultural history of India. It is no wonder that intelligentsia of the time could not follow him. They misunderstood him. The so-called reformers who considered themselves to be the vanguards of Indian progress called him reactionary! And the ignorant pseudo-Marxists of to-day call him a counter-revolutionary. It is the scattered-brained ignoramuses who without an analytical knowledge of dialectics of Historical-Materialism come to a wrong conclusion. A cheap sibboleth does not explain phenomena of Indian history.

Swami Vivekananda wanted the reformation of the Indian society root-and-branch. That is evinced in his writings all over. He was an *egalitarean* through and through.

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17. Works: 'Modern India'. Vol. IV, pp. 399-400.
18. Compare the opinions of the Indian savants on racial origins, history and their attitude towards the newly discovered "Indus valley civilization".

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Again, he was far above the time when he truly appraised the sociological fact, that it was the toilers of India and elsewhere who produce wealth.[19].

Then he castigates the upper classes of his own country who by degrading the Sudra of India have in turn been degraded by the English rulers into Sudrahood. In a figurative language, Swamiji denounces the trend of action and thought of the Indian Upper classes who from time immemorial have exploited the toiling masses. He has also pointed out that Nemesis has taken place in their case. All the Indians high and low are now the beasts of burden of the alien rulers!

Regarding this sad state of things in Indian society and the degraded lot of the proletariate of other countries he prophesies, "Yet a time will come, when there will be the rising of the Sudra class with their *Sudra-hood;*.....will gain absolute supremacy in every society."[20]

Here he gives a clear-cut sociological analysis of the social phenomenon of the rise of the lowly. Hitherto those of the lower and exploited orders who have risen above with the power of their brain or brawn have disavowed their own former class affiliation and have arrogated to themselves the claim of being a member of the upper one. Truly, the writer Romain Rolland has said those who have risen to higher order by the power of their fist disown and persecute bitterly their former class-men.[21] This in socialist phraseology is called "petty-bourgeois mentality." The man lower down wants to rise to the class above him and forgets about the class in which he was born. Many of the labor leaders of England sprung from the proletariate class, yet by taking aristocratic titles have become members of the nobility. In Indian History we find that from Mahapadma Nanda to Ranjit Singh in the nineteenth century, the phenomenon of "petty bourgeois mentality" is apparent. History says that many of the Hindu emperors and conquerors were

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19. Works: Vol. IV. p. 399.
20. Works: Vol. IV. p. 401.
21. Romain Rolland: "The Combat". Vide the lives of Mussolini and Hitler.

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*Sudras*. But their elevation to emperorship or royalty did not help in anyway the amelioration of the lot of the toiling masses. On the other hand, they have concocted geneological tables tracing their descent from the Sun and the Moon!

The rise of individual men of the Sudra and of very lower orders, did not help the exploited and oppressed classes of India to ameliorate their condition in anyway. Those conquerors with the power of their fists only raised themselves. They did not elevate their class.

Thus Swamiji is prophesying that time is coming when the exploited masses "will gain absolute supremacy in every society". Then he beaconed to the fact that, "The first glow of the dawn of this new power has already began to slowly break upon the Western world[22]. Here he adumberates the future that is coming. Elsewhere he prophesied to his American disciples[23] that either in Russia or in China the first *Sudra State* will be established where the exploited masses in Indian parlance called *Sudras* will become supreme in society and in State. Romain Rolland quotes from the unpublished Memoirs of late Sister Christine (Christina Grinstidle) the following passages: "Thirty-two years ago (that is in 1896) he said to me: 'The next upheaval that is to usher in another era, will come from Russia or from *China*. I cannot see clearly which but it will be either the one or the other". And again, 'The world is in the third epoch under the domination of Vaishya (the merchant, the third estate). The fourth epoch will be under that of the Sudra (the proletariate)." So he was clear in his vision that the coming age of human society will be marked by the uprise of the lowly, the toiling masses and they will rule the society. Does this prophecy sound reactionary or counter-revolutionary? Did he not prophesy about of what took place in 1917 in Petrograd in those "ten days that shook the world" when the establishment of the first proletarian state took place, and what again took place in China when the "People's Government" was established a few years ago!

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22. Works: Vol. IV. p. 401.
23. Vide: "Foreward"; also Romain Rolland: "Life of Vivekananda", p. 166.

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Again, Swamiji's latter-day disappointment in seeing the grinding down of all by capitalist machine and the pride of race and color in the U. S. A. made him explain the following as reported by Romain Rolland again: "He (Swamiji) said to Miss MacLeod, who repeated it to me: 'So American is just the same! So she will not be the instrument to accomplish the work; but China or Russia' (meaning: the realization of the double allied mission of the West and East)."[24]

Thus, it is clear from Swamiji's utterances that he expected the new synthesis of culture of man, where there neither will be the East nor the West but one Humanity to grow either in Russia, a semi-oriental country with a veneer of occidental culture or in China a very ancient eastern country which is slowly imbibing Western culture. And this prophecy was made long before Lenin perhaps had the idea of establishing a proletarian class-less State in Russia or before Mao Tse Tung was born.[25] This brilliant vision came from a monk born in Calcutta long ago, yet the enthusiastic young men of Calcutta and elsewhere run helter and skelter to get the ideal from abroad. Age-worn slave mentality is to be discerned in this strange attitude of mind. The glamour of something "foreign" fascinates our youngmen. To them anything "Indian" savours of reaction and backwardness. Truly Swamiji has said, "We have been slaves for ever i.e. it has never been given to the masses of India to express the inner light which is their inheritance".[26]

Now the question comes—how to raise the masses. In this matter Swamiji says, "I see it before my eyes, a nation is advanced in

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24. R. Rolland: Ibid., p. 81.

25. Swami Vivekananda was in London for the first time when Dr. Sun Yat Sen was entrapped at the Chinese Embassy; but rescued by the English Police in 1896 A.D. The writer's elder brother Mahendra Nath was in London at that time. He met him at the British Museum. Seeing a strange oriental standing at the hall like a man from no where, he asked him whether he could be of any service to him. Thereupon, the stranger exclaimed: "I am that much talked Chinese"! Both of them became friends later on. At that time, such an idea as Swamiji had on China, never crossed the mind of Sun Yat Sen or any of his associates.

26. Works: Vol. IV, p. 414.

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proportion as education and intelligence spread among the masses. .....But I did not find one association for them, by sucking whose blood the people known as 'gentlemen' have become and continue to be gentlemen".[27] Here his castigation of the Bourgeoisie is appropriate. The Bourgeoisie is interested in social reforms but is loath to raise the classes further down the social scale. The submerged section of the people is below their consideration.

Then he comes with the remedy to this sad state of major portion of the population. He gives the following program: "Travelling through many cities of Europe and observing in them the comforts and education of even the poor people.....Education was the answer I got."[28] Then he exhorts the youngmen to take up the work as he says, "I bequeath to you, youngmen, this sympathy, this struggle for the poor, the ignorant, the oppressed.... Vow then to devote your whole lives to the cause of the redemption of these three hundred millions going down and down everyday."[29] Further he reminds the youngmen: "Remember that the nation lives in the cottage".[30] Then as a method of education he advises the youngmen in the following words: "Try to have their (masses) eyes opened as to what has taken place or is taking place in different countries, what this world is like and so forth. .....Go to their cottages from door to door and open their eyes". Further he says, "Teach some boys and girls of the peasant classes the rudiments of learning and infuse a number of ideas into their brains". Again he speaks of education of women.

Thus he gives a practical program for the elevation of the downtrodden people of India. Had it been accepted by his disciples and the youthful national workers, the cause of India's regeneration would have been advanced by decades long ago. But it fell on deaf ears and shared the same fate as the exhortations of the leaders of the Bethune Society in by-gone days. The class-interest of the middle class made it immune to any such radical social program.

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27. Works: Vol. IV, p. 415.
28. Works: Ibid., p. 416.
29-30. "Life of Swami Vivekananda". Vol. IV, p. 180; 181.

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The youthful national workers of Bengal who hearkened to Swamiji's call, were not properly led by their leaders in the field of work. To these leaders the idea of raising the status of the workers and peasants was unheard of. It was outside their imagination. They talked of secretly preparing the youth of the middle class and to make an attempt for the overthrow of the British rule.[31] Mazzini's autobiography Vol. I, lent by Sister Nivedita was the "Bible" of the young workers. It is true that some young workers here and there started charitable dispensaries, Swadeshi stores, etc., and tried to mix with the peasants; but their object was to arouse the national feeling of the masses to help the Bourgeoisie in overthrowing the British rule. Here it must be made clear that in India during the period of her enslavement, "national feeling" was nothing but racial feeling against the alien rulers. Swamiji's ideas and program were unthinkable to them. The dialectics of Historical-Materialism did not lead the country to that state of mentality at that time. India had to wait more than two decades for mass movement. But what is going on in the name of mass movement at present is not in consonance with Swamiji's ideas. It is being generally tagged with the movement of the Bourgeoisie. The exploited masses are still being asked to sacrifice themselves at the altar of Bourgeois interest.

Hence the masses are not awakened to demand their just place in the body-politic of the society. On the other hand, during the Non-co-operation movement, religion was made the lever of mass awakening. Religious fanaticism against the alien rulers became the instrument of national struggle. Later on, Mahatma Gandhi enunciated the strange dictum that, "the rich are the trustees of the property of the poor." To the exploited and downtrodden masses this sibboleth to protect the vested interests of the capitalist class was unintelligible. More mystery was brought into existence to befog the vision of the exploited and toiling

31. The writer only heard of labor movement of Bombay from the late writer Sakharam Ganesh Deuskar who asked young revolutionaries to read socialistic literature. Again, he heard of socialist program of work from late A. K. Ghose, Bar-at-Law, a labor leader of Swadeshi days of Bengal. He was an avowed Socialist.

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classes regarding the true import of bourgeois-nationalist movement. As a corollary, the counterpart of the Indian National Congress, the All-India Moslem League, took up the mystic cry and added to it the sibboleths that, "Islam is socialism. Islam is halfway between socialism and communism".[32]

Here we remember the utterances of Swamiji: "The one problem you have to give to the masses their rights.....you feed the masses with stuff and nonsense".[33] Thus he is denouncing the exploiting policy of the upper strata of the Indian society towards the masses. He clearly says that the exploited classes are being humbugged in everyway. It is a fact that religion has been a great weapon of exploitation of the ignorant and benumbed masses of India. In this way, religion has become a capitalist proposition. Swamiji was aware of it, and he hinted at it in various ways.

The writer as a worker in the national field whether in its revolutionary phase or in its National Congress phase, says emphatically that if the advice of Swami Vivekananda to educate and elevate the masses had been followed by the workers for freedom, such an outburst of fanaticism, communal riots leading to the partition of the motherland would have been averted.

But the fact is that the National Movement of India always has been a bourgeois-capitalist movement. The masses so long has been the canonfodder at the altar of bourgeois vested interests. Hence, any talk of arousing class-consciousness of the toiling masses had been an anathema both in the revolutionary field and in National Congress field. Truly Swamiji has said, "Slaves want power to make slaves".[34]

Again, no clear conception of reconstruction of future India was allowed to be discussed amongst the national workers. In what form the future Indian state will take shape, how the future social-polity of India will take form, etc., were not allowed to be cogitated amongst the workers in any national field. In Bengal the revolutionaries were told that the constitution of free India would

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32. Cantwell Smith: "Modern Islam in India", 1943.
33. Works: Vol. VII, p. 153.
34. Works: Vol. IV, p. 313.



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be somewhat intermediate between the constitution of the Federal Government of the United States of America and the Federal Imperial Government of Germany.[35] On the other hand, the writer heard with his own ears what Aurobinda Ghose said circa, 1904, to a student worker in the revolutionary field in the following words: "The Sadhus dwelling on the banks of the Narvada, have found out by their Yoga-power that the future emperor of independent India is born in a Suryabansi royal family. The revolutionaries are working by making him their leader".[36] Indeed, this stuff and nonsense imported from Baroda was circulated among Bengal revolutionaries of the first batch. And the revolutionaries wondered who this future emperor could be.

Again, in the Congress and Hindu Sabha fields, the workers were not allowed to arouse the class-consciousness of the laborers and peasants. In the Congress field there had been constant frictions between the orthodox workers and those workers who worked among the peasantry, according to the mandate of "Mass-contact" program of the National Congress. All these are narrated here from personal experiences. The criticism and opposition that the writer and his colleagues got from the orthodox Congress camp are not unknown to the national workers.

The national workers were kept in ignorance about the form of the future state of the country. Free enquiry was not allowed in the national field. Especially, since the days of Non-Co-operation movement education was discountenanced. On the contrary, hero-worship was advocated. The strange phenomenon is that the utopian programs of the middle of the nineteenth century Europe were introduced in Hindu garb, and the political leader was apotheosized in his life time. Even miraculous stories about his doings were in circulation among the deluded people. Further it was talked about that he was the promised *Kalki Avatar*.

As a result, political thought came at its lowest ebb. Bigotry

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35. Somewhat analogous constitution has been accepted by the constitution of free India, that is Bharat.

36. Vide writer's book: "Second War of Independence" (in Bengalee).

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took the place of free enquiry in the political field. Again, it engendered fanaticism among a section of the Indian people.

The thing to be noticed is that, free enquiry among the thinkers of India has been conspicuous by its absence in modern India. The phenomenon that took place in the rise of the galaxy of enquiring mind challenging every existing institution and belief that was the precursor of the "Great French Revolution"[37] is still absent in the Indian field. Similarly, the appearance of the bold and independent thinkers that arose in Russia[38] before the Revolution, challenging the historical institutions of the country past and present, never had its analogy in India. In Indian thought, we are swinging from one sort of mysticism to another, from one kind of bigotry to another, from one form of fanaticism to another, from one superstition to another. Nobody is conscious of the materialistic changes that are constantly taking place in the body-politic of India. The theory of cognition is not understood in the land of Vedanta. Hence, all are talking *Sanatanabad.*

As a corollary to Sanatanabad in the field of thought, there has been complete ignorance in the matter of reconstruction of future independent India. This has resulted in the confusion in the national field of today. Parties and policies, theoretical ideologies and practical works are at variance with each other. Is not this intellectual confusion in the political field responsible for the murder of Mahatma Gandhi! Did not the introduction of mysticism in the economic field which was nothing but a screen for capitalistic exploitation, helped to fructify the view of communal "Two nation" theory? Has not this screen given rise to labor and peasant troubles in the country? Is not the State evolving Plutocracy in place of *Ram Raj* of Gandhiji and Democracy of the constitution? Are not all these attempts of the upper bourgeoisie directed to suppress the uprise of the toiling masses?

The exploited, hungry and impoverished Demos demands a bold

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37. Vide the works of Voltaire, Rousseau, Montaigne and the Encyclopædists.
38. Vide Masaryk: "Spirit of Russia".

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answer and free enquiry of these contradictions. The resultant force of all these ideological confusions and disturbances in the body-politic of India has landed her in a mælstrom of confusion in reconstructing new resurgent India. Consequently, enquiring mind is looking across the borders for the solution. But they do not know or do not care to know that a solvent has been given to them long ago by Swami Vivekananda. It was he who wanted a complete rehauling of the Indian society root-and-branch. He, in his prophetic vision gave a program of work which if followed would have prevented the partition of the motherland.

The trouble in Indian body-politic is caused by the vested interests of the upper classes. Nobody cared to enquire into the condition of the masses. They were always disregarded. The attempt to make the masses class-conscious i. e. to arouse their self-cognition has been a taboo with all the political parties.

In this situation Swamiji's utterances are to be considered. He clearly asks: "Who constitute society? The millions or you, I and few others of the upper classes."[39] *A propos* these millions he again says, "No amount of politics would be of any avail until the masses in India are once more well educated, well fed, and well cared for.....If we want to regenerate India, we must work for them".[40]

As a sequel to all these wailing for the downtrodden Indian masses, he said as early as in 1896 that he was a *socialist*.[41] As a commentary he says: "I am a socialist not because I think it is a perfect system, but half a loaf is better than no bread".

Thus calling himself a socialist, he adumbrates the future society of India where the toilers would evolve a new civilization. A new civilization produced by the proletariate had been his ideal. This would remove all social and communal frictions and create the New India which the thoughtful men are aspiring today. Then he puts forth his vision of the Indian Proletarian Culture of the future".[42]

In this prophetic vision of New India he gives a program in a nut-

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39. Works: Vol. V, p. 110.
40. Ibid., p. 152.
41. "Letters of Swami Vivekananda", p. 348.
42. Works: Vol. VII, pp. 308-310.

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shell which entails a complete overhauling of socio-economic structure of polity of India. Has anybody given a more radical socio-economic program for India's regeneration?

The clarion-call of Swami Vivekananda was too radical for the Indian bourgeoisie and hence it has remained hidden in the books, unheeded and unnoticed by the nationalists. The wine of this call has been too strong for the vested interests and their dependents.

But the history of India is changed. Dialectics of history has made her an independent republican State. In this way, Bourgeois-national struggle against the alien rulers has reached its completion. Now is the time to reconsider the socio-economic structure of the body-politic of India.

But the question is who is to bell the cat? A complete reconstruction of the Indian society needs a thorough socio-economic transformation.

It is always dinned in the ears of the people that India is a spiritual country which is wedded to "Ahimsa" from her earliest years. But where is Ahimsa in political, social and economic exploitations? Where is spirituality in present-day Indian society about which Swamiji says, "Do you not see taking up this plea of *Sattva,* the country has been slowly and slowly drowned in the ocean of *Tamas* or dark ignorance?[43]

The dialectics of Historical-Materialism is changing fast the history of India. India as seen by Swami Vivekananda is not the same as today. The sand of hours are running fast through the Indian history. The dialectical contradictions in the society are impelling Indian masses to move forward. Today they are catching the spirit of the ancient Rishis of Aitereya Brahmana *'Charaiveti Charaiveti'* (March on! March on!). Nascent New India is determined to make her marks on the history of present-day world. The desideratum is the united and conscious effort to fix her national ideal. That ideal is given by Swamiji long ago. Hence our youth need not run hither and thither to procure a world-view for their work. They need not run after chimeras and foreign mirages for the satisfaction of their lives' hankerings.

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43. Works: Vol. IV, p. 335.

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The ideal is nearer at hand and of indigenous growth. The youngmen must wean their minds away from foreign hypnotism. Independent Bharat must shake off her slave-mentality. She must stand on own native soil and work. They must remember that Stalin the former head of a proletarian state has warned his comrades by saying, that, "Those who are not rooted to the soil will wither away".

Independent India has got a mission to give to the world. Her inherent race-capacity has made her free again. She is on the threshold of a tremendous epoch. Her's is not going to be a vegetative civilization any longer. She must remember what once the greatest of the Indians, the Buddha said, when he sent out the young Indians who have renounced the world, "Go out oh Bhikshus, preach the doctrine glorious: For the welfare of many, for the happiness of many".

That mission has devolved on the young Indians again. Taking their stand on a new Indian civilization where there will be no castes and class, they must go out to the world, neither for aggrandizement and imperial conquest, nor for enslavement of the others but to preach the divinity that is in man. They must strive for a human society where there will be no exploitation of man over man, no domination of man over man, where the dignity of man will be fully respected. They must fulfil Swami Vivekananda's ideal—where there shall be no East nor West but a synthesis of both.

The present book is sent out to the world to show Swami Vivekananda in true perspective. Hitherto he has been hidden under the mazes of vested interests. Long ago, Subhas Chandra Bose has perceived it when he said: "Vivekananda's teachings had been neglected by his own followers.....and we are going to give effect to them".[44] Hence this book which is a study of Swami Vivekananda is sent out to the world. It is to be hoped that the truth-seeking men and youthful workers for national reconstruction will peruse this book which contains the teachings and sayings of Swami Vivekananda regarding resuscitation of mother Bharat.

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44. Netaji's "Life and Writings", Pt. I, p. 68, 1948.

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# I

## SOCIAL HEREDITY OF NINETEENTH CENTURY

The study of sociology is not much in vogue in India. Social science is not fully appreciated as yet. To the people of India, everything is *Sanatana*. The Nityabad of Vadarayana and his commentator Sankaracharya has fought against the Khanikabad of the Buddhists and others. Hence, the truth that every thing is in flux, everything is becoming, is not realized. To the Hindus, Moslems and other religionists, their religion, custom and law, etc., are regarded as revealed i.e., God-sent. As such, they are *Nitya* or eternal. On this account, no doubt about religion or social habits emanating from them are to be entertained. No deviation is to be allowed. Such stability of mind led the rite of *Sati* i.e., the burning of the widows at the funeral pyre of their husbands go unchallenged for four hundred years. As the Veda is the revealed scripture and as Pandit Raghunandan has quoted the Veda in defence of the rite, hence there cannot be any doubt about its justification. Thus this social sanction is upheld by the priesthood as permanent legislation of the Hindu society, which is ruled by divine order given through the revealed book.

But the modern social scientists call this attitude of mind as the outcome of the arrested growth of a moribund civilization. This social phenomenon is to be observed in every religion, in every clime and in every society. Most of the ancient countries are suffering from this arrested growth. On the other hand, India i.e., Bharat is on the upward trend in the curve of her progress. Indian Society is again dynamic. She has caught again the spirit of the ancient sages.

The Renaissance of India came too late, it came in the middle of the nineteenth century. So long, priestcraft was reigning supreme. It was exploiting the people in the name of religion. It kept the people absolutely ignorant and degraded. The fight between

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the conquering Moslems and the conquered Indians later on called the "Hindus", and who were always on the defensive, emboldened priestcraft to tighten its grip more than ever. The ignorant and deluded masses were kept in superstitious awe in the name of the revealed book. Religious songs used to be sung in honor of goddess Kali that she is called in the Veda as "three-eyed one"! Sukta of the Rigveda was discovered which spoke of Sakti known as "Devi". Even Radha, the lover of Krishna of Vrindaban, is alleged to be mentioned in the Rig-Veda. But nobody cared to enquire about the genesis of Kali and of Radha worship. Every rite, every ceremony, every custom, every new-fangled tenet was imposed on the people as the sanction of the revealed scripture. What was the result of this crass superstition and heartless priestly exploitation? We have got the testimonies from the foreign travellers. India was emasculated and fell a prey to the onslaught of the foreigners. As a result of political subjugation, the people in their distress were either selling themselves in slavery or to get preferential treatment from the hands of the Moslem rulers, were changing their religion. The system of slavery reached its apex during the imperial Tughlugs, who systematically attempted the conversion of the Hindus, by various means.[1] Again, Barbosa, the Portuguese traveller of the fifteenth century said, that the people of Bengal were becoming Mohammedans in streams. Besides these, attempt was made by the Moslem rulers to disorganise the Hindu society from within. As the priesthood is the repository of the lores and the traditions of the people, therefore history testifies that always the foreign conquerors have tried to destroy the priestly class of the conquered people. As with the disappearance of the priests, the time-honored ceremonies and traditions get lost, the people gradually fall victims to the attempt of the conquerors to forget their separate existence. Such an attempt to destroy the Hindus had been made in Bengal. It seems that the Moslem rulers tried a novel method to disintegrate the Brahman class. From the time of the

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1. Vide Elliot: "History of India told by her own historians"; Ishwari Prasad: "History of Mohammedan rule in India"; "History of the Quarani Turks."

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establishment of the Moslem rule, we find that Brahman families are getting *Javana-dosas,* i.e., those men of the Brahman caste who came into contact with the Moslems got ostracized. The Padma Purana bemoans that in this aweful *Kaliyuga* some people deal with the bearded horse-riding *Turuskas!* Apart from that, new faults were discovered to ostracize a Brahman from the caste. If any one has smelt the food of a Mohammedan though involuntarily, gets ostracized. If any one is beaten or touched by a Mohammedan then he loses his caste.[2] As a result Rahri and Varendra septs of Brahmans of Bengal got some *dosas* i.e., faults in their families.

This led to serious consequence in Brahman community. No one can get married as families free from blemishes will not marry in a family with Javana-Contact. Again, those who will marry in these families will get blemishes and will be ostracized in turn.

Then came Devibar Ghattak from Vikrampur to reorganize the Brahman society. He arranged so that peoples with common fault will inter-marry amongst themselves. This means, persons who are ostracized for contact with Rohillas will form a group (Mel) by themselves; those who have Pathan-dosas, likewise will form a group, etc. This is called *Mel-bandhana.* In this way, the Rahri Brahmans were organized into thirty-six groups; the Varendra Brahmans into several groups. And all these groups had Javana-dosas. Thus, it is evident that these two septs of Brahmans who form the majority of Brahman community, were made topsy-turvy. Again, from these ostracized men the Moslem rulers used to get converts.[3]

This sad state of things happened in Bengal alone. Elsewhere, Brahmans have become Mohammedans from the days of Muhammad ben Kasem. But nowhere in the name of injunction of the scripture do we find that the Brahmans have been disabled to remain in the society any longer. The *smritis* say that if any one

2. Vide N. N. Vasu Prachyavidyarnava: "Social History of Bengal—"Brahman Kanda" (In Bengalee).

3. In this way we got Kalapahar—the idol-breaker, and in this way we have got the present-day Pakistani prophet of Bengal who a few years ago was a staunch nationalist claiming of ostracised Brahman descent.

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gets a fault or commits a sin, penance (*Prayascitta*) is the remedy for him. But no ostracism or driving out from the community is sanctioned.

But this took place in Bengal since the English put a stop to it. Why these dreadful phenomena took place in Bengal Brahmanical society is the question. Was it a morbid notion of "untouchability" or contact dread that any Brahman who has something to do with a Moslem must get ostracized from the society?

It is strange that only in the Moslem period, that notions of purity and untouchability named by Ramanujacharya the great Vaishnava leader of the south, as, *three dosas* were formulated. But in Bengal, these notions were systematically misapplied. Why? That is our query.

Some time ago, the present-writer visited Navadwipa to make enquiry regarding the sociology of Vaishnava community. He met the great Vaishnava leader late Haridas Goswami. In the course of conversation the writer asked, how was it that the Brahman who had some contact with a Mohammedan by touch or smell used to get ostracized from the society, while the same phenomenon did not take place in any other province. The venerable old man said, "Alas! the Brahmans can do anything for the sake of money. By getting bribes from the Moslem rulers they used to ostracize the other Brahmans." On being interrogated regarding the proofs of this assertion, he answered that he has written about it in the papers and asked the writer to look into the pages of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika.*

This set the writer athinking and began to make enquiries about it. Then it was found out that lots of Brahmans have got *la-kheraj* lands from the Moslem rulers. Again, in the Mogul period, some got *madatmash* land. Now, the question is, why did these Brahmans get such rent-free land from the Moslem rulers? They must have done something to help them in their rule; hence these rewards.

Finally, the most authoritative evidence comes from the English source. In the latter part of the Eighteenth Century, the Mogul emperor Shah Alum handed over in 1765 the *Dewanny* of the provinces of Bengal, Behar and Orissa to the English East India Company. It means, the civil administration of the country was

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handed over to their hands. Therefore, the English Company reorganized the administration of the province. The scheme of the reorganization has been embodied in the book called "Select Committee's Report." This report says that in every village there are Maulavies and Brahman pandits who act as judges in law matters. But they got no licence for their jobs. The Brahmans ostracize any man against whom they are piqued. But as the king only can reinstate a man to caste, the man remains in the state of ostracism, because the Moslem rulers are indifferent to it as they hate the Hindus. Hence, the English East India Company ordered that nobody should be ostracized without any just ground. Thus the English saved the Hindus from further disintegration. It is by the grace of the English East India Company that we did not get any more families with the Javana-dosas, viz., Angrez-dosa, Farasi-dosa, Allemagne-dosa, Dinamar-dosa, Olandaz-dosa, etc!

Here, the thing is to be remembered that the Moslem rulers used to judge the civil cases of the Hindus through their Brahman Pandits. It is by taking advantage of this situation that peoples have been wantonly ostracised by these judges, many of whom perhaps were in secret service of their alien masters. This was the state of Bengal society before the advent of the British rule.

The dialectical contradictions arising out of historical materialistic condition of the country, gave rise to the reform movements known as the *santa*-movements in North-India. The onslaught of Islamic religion on the hoary traditions, customs and beliefs of India gave birth to all-India reform movements known as neo-Vaishnavism. It provided a personal God (*Saguna Brahman*) who is not only a fighting God but also one who hears prayers of his devotees, and confers his blessings on them. In Bengal the wave of the new movement was personified in the rise of Sri Chaitanya and his associates. The disciples of Chaitanya worked wonders in the province of Bengal. They preached that God is to be worshipped through faith. Again, the leaders made it a rival of Islam in social matters. The devotees challenged the Brahmanical orthodoxy and exclaimed:

"All the low castes that give rise to vaishnavas.....all those are

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to be respected and are dear to world" (Vaishnava-bandana). Again, they triumphantly said: "Javanas and Brahmans are embracing each other, let everybody see it" (Dukhi Krishna-das).

There are records that many Moslems were converted to Chaitanya's cult. The foremost of them was Brahma or Thakur Haridas![4] Vasudeva Sarvabhaumya, the Court-Pandit of the King of Orissa greeted him by exclaiming: "Irrespective of caste or family I bow down to Haridas." Even Chaitanya-cult introduced widow-remarriage and divorce system among the *Jativaishnavas*. There is no distinction of caste or race among the Jati-vaishnavas after receiving the *bhek* (initiation) from the Guru.[5]

But antithesis worked again in this society. The house-holder Vaishnavas who remained in the orthodox society, have fallen in the clutches of the members of Brahmanical priesthood who insinuated themselves into the community as Goswamis.[6]

The Gaudiya Vaishnava movement as Chaitanya's movement is called changed the social history of Bengal. Before its rise there were ten religions existing in the country. Buddhism was assimilated in Hinduism in the following way: The Brahmans, the Kayasthas and the Vaidyas who according to late Pandit Haraprasad Sastri were Mahayanist-Buddhists have changed themselves as Saktas. The Mahayanists, as Buddhist Tantrikas were responsible for Sakti-worship. The *Ekajata devi* introduced by Nagarjuna from Bhutan became the mother *Kali*. The *dhyan* of both are the same. As, Pandit Sastri says that during Brahmanical revival in Bengal when they crushed Buddhist culture of the place, they took some of the Buddhist gods as their own. Again, they absorbed some of the Buddhist rites and ceremonies and gave them place in their Smritis. The *Tantra-*

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4. Haridas' picture and his dress as depicted in painting and in statue in which he is worshipped at Madhai-ghat, Navadwipa, betray his Pathan origin.

5. The writer knows the case of a Bengalee Moslem who has become a Vaishnava Vairagi. An Arab boy brought by late Captain Dr. N. N. Datta to Calcutta, has become a Vairagi likewise.

6. Vide the sociology of Bengal Vaishnavas in B. N. Datta's "Sociological enquiry in Vaishnava Literature" (In Bengalee).

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*sara* of Krishnananda Agambagish bears witness[7] to this assimilating process. The Agambagishes assimilated Buddhist Tantricism. The Vaishnava leaders assimilated the Sahajayana Buddhists. Thus the masses of the lower orders of the Buddhists became Vaishnavas, while the aristocratic officials during the Buddhist rule who were Mahayanists became the Saktas of today. They are still adhering to Kali, Tara, Ugratara, Dasa-mahavidya worship and *Panchamakara* method of Sadhana as of old. Class-character is discerned in this cleavage of the Buddhist society.[8]

Again, the masses of Buddhist *Natha* sect later on known as the sect of Gorakhnatha, who were probably mostly peasants and of toiling classes, became Mohammedans. It is said that the Mohammedan peasants of the district of Tippera (now East-Pakistan) still recite the names of the three Natha Gurus in the evening. Further, in East Bengal, some of these Mohammedan peasants through their Hindu neighbours worship the Natha Gurus.

The Nathas who today have formed themselves into a caste and are called *Jugis* in common perlance, became the *Jolahas* of the Mohammedan society. But the old stigma still remains, the Jolahas have started a movement to elevate their status as *Momins*. One by changing his religion does not change his social status. We have ample testimony of it in the social histories of those countries where the people have changed their religions in the course of time. Similarly, the Hindu Jugis have become Vaishnavas and Saivas but the stigma yet remains.[9] Thus, today, among the Bengalee-speaking people of the province what was called before 1947 as Bengal, we find the Mohammedans as the preponderant group, then come the Vaishnavas, lastly the Saktas.

This Kaleidoscopic change in society of Bengal, has been the work of the Gaudiya Vaishnava sect. The *tantric* rites

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7. Vide the presidential speech given by Sastri at Sahitya-Parishad (in S. P. Patrika).
8. Vide Sastri's Introduction to N. N. Vasu's *"Buddhism in modern Orissa."*
9. Today they are arrogating to themselves as Brahmans.

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with their hideous gods and goddesses became things of the forgotten past. Alchemy and miracle-mongering were much in discountenance. Vaishnavism like elsewhere became a mass movement. But its potentiality as a nation-building factor like that in Maharastra and in the Punjab was lost in Bengal, as no one like Swami Ramdas and Guru Gobinda Singh arose in that Province.[10] The otherworldliness of the Vaishnava leaders made them immune to politics. From Chaitanya downward their attitude had been, "render unto Caesar what is Caesar's, unto God what is God's." It seems their energy was spent in fighting the bloody-rites of the neo-Buddhist-Tantrikas known as the Saktas and Kapalikas. Again, the latter-day Goswamis were more interested in augmenting the number of their householder-disciples which is a very lucrative trade.

Vaishnavism in Bengal latter-on became a mass movement. It is written in "Chaitanya-Bhagavata" that Advaitacharya's first request to Nimai Pandit, laterly known as Sri Krishna Chaitanya Bharati, when he started his propaganda was to be merciful to the Sudras. Nimai promised it. There is an import to it. It is of great significance in the social history of Bengal. Advaita's great-grand father was the adviser of King Ganesha. It is said that by his advice, Ganesha, became the independent King of Bengal.[11] Afterwards his son Jadu turned a Mohammedan. North-Bengal tradition says that conversion took place on account of Asmantara, the daughter of the former Moslem King. Perhaps Barbosa hinted at him when he said that even Maharajas changed their religion for a trifling temptation. When the common people were flying to Islamic polity in streams, there was no wonder that a learned man like Advaita would be conscious of the fact that where the shoe of the Hindu society pinches. Jadu, after his conversion offered Koran or sword to his former Co-religionists. Men like Vasudeva Sarvabhauma and others fled the country. The Sultan of Gaud devasted Navadwipa then the seat of Hindu learning.[12] All these happen-

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10. Vide discussion about it in Charu Ch. Dutt—"Ramdas and Shivaji" (in Bengalee).
11. Vide Ishan Nagar: "Advaita-Prakash", (in Bengalee).
12. Jayananda's "Chaitanya-mangal."

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ings must have left their marks in the minds of the thinking people. At that time, the upper class of the Hindus of Bengal were hand in glove with the Moslem rulers. The Kayasthas were the feudal landlords of the country, and during the reign of Hussein Shah held the important ministerial posts of the Governments. They were all Tantrikas. The Brahman priesthood supported by the Kayastha Bhuiya-rajas were promulgating their new smritis.[13] There was *"standpat"* between these two castes which is contrary to the facts of other provinces. There was a socio-economic symbiosis between the two to exploit the masses. The masses perhaps as the quondam Hinayanist-Buddhists or of the Natha sect, being exploited and depressed by the upper classes had no other alternative but to take refuge in Islam, where they would get Government protection and exemption from obnoxious taxes and differential treatment from the Moslem rulers. These were not lost to Advaita and his associates. The attempt to make Bengal independent has failed. The Hindu King's son became a fanatical Mohammedan. There was also a rumour that a Brahman would be a King of Navadwipa. This has been stated in *Chaitanya Bhagavata*. Acting on this rumour, the Sultan of Gaud has devastated Navadwipa. Now comes the question, what is the remedy!

Advaita saw clearly that the masses who are regarded as the "Sudras" on account of their depressed condition are taking a mass flight to the other camp. Here is to be noted that a strange social fiction was created since the Mohammedan invasion, that in *Kaliyuga* only the two *Varnas*: the Brahmans and the Sudras are extant. This led Raghunandan in latter days to formulate the dictum that only two varnas exist in Bengal: the Brahmans and the Sudras. It is said that Bengal neo-Smartas declare that *Yama-samhita* contains the dictum. But the printed text does not show it. Indeed it is not to be found in any of the authoritative religious texts.[14] The trading classes, the represen-

13. Vide Sastri's Presidential Speech in S. P. Patrika.

14. Vide discussions about in—Gupte's "History of medieval Hindu India"; B. N. Datta's—"Bharatiya Samaj Padhyati" and "Sociological enquiry in Vaishnava literature" (in Bengalee).

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tatives of old trade-guilds called in sanskrit literature *Shrenis*, have now formed themselves into hereditary castes. It is they who control the wealth of the country. Yet, their lot had not been a good one. There was some stigma attached to them. They are called as *Nava-sayakas* (nine arrows);[15] colloquially, they are called Nava-saks. According to Pandit Sastri they were Buddhists who were taken into the orthodox fold by accepting the supremacy of the Brahmanical priesthood and their commandments. Thus they were really the "Nava-Sakhas", i. e. nine branches added in the orthodox fold.[16]

Be that what it may, the trading classes known as Navasaks had some practical difficulties in the society. They must have had some grievances; otherwise *en masse* they would not have taken refuge in Chaitanya's new religion. It is a wonder that they did not embrace Islam like some of their trading fellow-castemen in Guzerat and in the Punjab. Again, it seems that this gives the clue to the fact that what led the Mohammedans of Bengal largely to be peasants and that there have been no trading classes among them. Perhaps the disinclination of these classes to accept Islam is accountable for the general poverty of the Bengal Moslem society. Perhaps the Moslem Community could not provide them with good social status which their wealth entitled them to get.

These classes were taken to the Neo-Vaishnava fold by Nityananda an associate of Chaitanya and his other followers known as *Goswamis*. In this way, they got respectibility and mobility of social development. The fact that the Goswami families were interdicted of *connubium* and *commensality* with the orthodox Brahmans known as *srotriyas*, bears testimony of the past lower status of these castes.[17] Thus, class-conflicts are to be discerned in all these social phenomena.

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15. Vide "Ballala-Charita" (in Sanskrit).
16. Vide Sastri's "Introduction" to N. N. Vasu's Book. "Buddhism in Modern Orissa".
17. Now-a-days commensality is in vogue but connubium is going one way, The srotriyas take the daughters of the Goswamis, but the vice-versa is not allowed.

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But in the course of time, the Goswamis copied the orthodox Brahmans. As Gurus they became hidebound, conservative and rapacious. There is a Bengalee couplet which says that, "a butcher is better than a Gosain (Goswami)"! The Goswamis re-introduced Brahmanical priestcraft in Vaishnava society. They introduced all sorts of prohibitions and taboos in the matter of purity, touchability and food.

Again, various Vaishnava sects fell under the influence of old Sahajyana cult and extreme form of Vamachara. They have unspeakable practices. In the name of love of Radha for Sri Krishna of Vrindavana, sex-laxity became prevalent. Again, the Goswami Gurus put into practice the custom of *Guru-gnai* or Guru-prasad (Lex Primus Noctis) i.e., the custom of sending the newly married wife after attaining her puberty, to spend her first night with the Goswami who is the Guru of the family. This practice has been prevalent all over the country among the Vaishnavas irrespective of caste and rank. It has been recognised as a part of socio-religious practice.[18] On enquiry, the late Haridas Goswami of Navadwipa, told the present-writer that it arose out of the desire of the devotee to sacrifice his best thing to the Guru. Another Goswami of the same place informed the writer, that as the devotees wanted good children like their gurus, they used to send their wives to them for deflowering. To the Vallavacharya sect it is a part of their "Pustimarga" doctrine. "The Vallavacharya defamation case" of Bombay that took place in the middle of nineteenth century brought this evil practice to public notice. The custom has been well-known in Bengal. Only in the nineteenth century when the aggrieved husbands by taking laws in their own hands began to belabour the amorous gurus, to save the honour and chastity of their wives that the custom began to die out.[19] The spread of modern education opening the eyes of the people against priestly exploitation, helped to eradicate the evil custom. In many places, the local landlord or the Raja of the country takes the place of the

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18. Vide Akshaya Kumar Datta: "Bharat Varshiya Upasak Sampradaya" for details (in Bengalee).
19. Vide "Hutam Pechar Nocsa" (in Bengalee).



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Guru. F. Engels sees in it the trace of *Panulian* marriage system.[20] Anyway, it is neither Indo-Aryan nor has it got Brahmanical sanction. Perhaps it has been a non-Aryan aboriginal practice which some sectaries picked up to swell their perennial mode of exploitation.

Again, the vamachara practices of the Saktas were obnoxious to sober moral men. Thus we see that all sorts of evil practices and objectionable rites were current in the name of religion. This was the legacy which the nineteenth century got before the Renaissance took place.

20. Vide discussions about it in writer's book: "Dialectics of Land-Economics of India."

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## II

## NINETEENTH CENTURY AND RENAISSANCE

The nineteenth century saw the English East India Company firmly intrenched in eastern India as a ruling power. They have the economic control of the country in their hands. Already they have introduced the system of "Parmanent Settlement" in 1793 by which the former land Revenue-Collectors of the Mogul Empire in the east were transformed into landholders with permanent tenure with the Government. Thus, for their own political motive the Government created a class of vested interests in land who became the allies of the new English rule.[1] These quondam revenue-collectors were euphemistically called the Zamindars or the land-holders. They began to give feudal airs.

### RISE OF THE BOURGEOISIE

On the other hand, the East Indian Companies of various European countries trading in Bengal gave rise to a rich Indian trading class some of whom became fabulously rich.

Again in Calcutta, the English merchants began to trade through Indian intermediaries known as "Black Banians". These Indians known as *Mutsuddies* were the suppliers of money and goods while the English merchants or companies as the members of the ruling class, lent their goodwills to the transactions. Thus a rich bourgeois class began to rise in Bengal. In these events, the Historical-Dialectical-Materialism of the country gave rise to a rich trading class in contradistinction to the landed semi-feudal vested interests. In this way, a leisured class grew in Bengal. Their business made them come in contact with the English and their world views. Again, *paripassu* the spread and strengthening

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1. Vide B. N. Datta: "Dialectics of Land-economics of India".

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of British rule, the administration demanded the appointment of the Indians in the services. Youngmen of Bengal even with little knowledge of English began to be drafted in the service. Thus, the basis of the bourgeois class began to broaden. The educated middle class that was growing began to influence the society. They became the intelligentsia of the country. It is this middle class by getting English education began to turn into lawyers, doctors, teachers, businessmen, etc.

Then the Christian missionaries from Serampore which was then a Danish settlement, began to make thunderous attacks on Hinduism. They established a printing press and published books for Bengalee readers. Their attacks on Hindu religion, philosophy, social life fell like sledge-hammer blows on the sleeping Hindu society. Christianization and its corollary ethnic change being the motive of this onslaught, materialistic contradiction gave rise to a new phenomenon that was momentous in the history of India.

## RISE OF RAMMOHAN ROY

The dialectical contradictions involved in the intellectual cross-currents amongst the intelligentsia gave rise to a man who is properly and justly called the *Prophet of New India.* Indeed the birth of Rammohan Roy in 1774 A.D. was an important event in the history of India. The dormant spirit of the Indo-Aryan race has awakened through him. He became the embodiment of new spirit of modern India which was then growing under the aegis of British rule. The advent of Rammohan to Calcutta in 1815 and his settling down there after his retirement from the service under the Government, was memorable day in the cultural history of India.

Rammohan Roy was a brilliant master-mind in the galaxy of the intellectual giants that appeared in India from ancient times. In Bengal, he was one of these geniuses, intellectual revolutionary geniuses that we meet in history since the advent of Chandragomin, another intellectual revolutionary giant of 500 A.D. In Rammohan we find the typical Indo-Aryan, virile in mind and

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body, reiterating the chants of the Vedic seer—March on! March on!

Rammohan was a versatile scholar who knew good many Oriental and European languages dead or alive. Born in the Brahman family of a landed proprietor, he was punctitiously orthodox in his habits. But his contact with Islamic literature shakened his belief in Brahmanical orthodoxy. By and bye, he became a monotheist of the unitarian type. The extraordinary thing about him that in such an early period when ancient Sanskrit religious literature was still unknown to modern gaze, he had the intellectual aptitude to jump from the epigonous Hinduism of the Mohammedan period to rationalist Theism of early nineteenth century. The crass rites, ceremonies, beliefs that were being added to Brahmanism since the Gupta period, made it a jumble of rites and customs existing only for priestly exploitation. Again, the Gupta age Brahmanical rites, Mahayanist ceremonies and beliefs, Buddhist-Tantrika rites, Buddhist-Sahajyanist customs were all pounded together by the aggressive attack of Islam. This attack only encrusted the jumble which the foreigners lebelled "Hinduism." Indo-Aryan customs at the time of marriage and law, Pauranic fasts and festivals, Scythian custom of burning the widows, totemistic notions of purity and taboo in the matter of touch and smell, non-Aryan customs, Buddhist-Tantrika rites and necromancies, Sahajyanist laxity of moral, non-vedic phallic worship, worship of Moslem *Satyapir*, veneration for the pirs, belief in astrology, auguries and divinations, belief in witch-craft and sorcery were the compound known as "Hinduism". Aldous Huxley calls it a "Perennial religion." Yes, it is perennial as the priestcraft wants to keep up the fountain of exploitation incessantly supplied!

## WORKS OF RAMMOHAN

The greatness of Rammohan Roy consisted in overcoming all these incrustations of beliefs and customs and arriving at rational theism. He combated all around Brahmanical orthodoxy and ignorance, Moslem orthodoxy, Christian evangelical bigotry and fanatical onslaught.

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Thus driven from point to point he became an eclectic monotheist of the rationalist type. His book in Persian, "Tuhafatul-Mohoiddin" evinced his attitude towards Islam. His, "Precepts of Jesus, the guide to peace and happiness" was the fitting answer to the bigoted evangelical missionaries. "The Brahmanical Magazine" of his, proved that the sastra and the philosophy of the Hindus have ordained the worship of one formless, *nirguna* (transcendent) God. *Paramatman* is incorporeal and transcendent according to the scripture. As regards Hindu conception of Paramatman he took his stand on Sankara's Vedanta-Bhasya modifying it to suit his monotheism. He fought every section with their own coins. Thus he answered a missionary that "if God can take the shape of a dove, why not then the form of a fish and Garuda-bird!"[2]

This led him to establish Brahmo Samaj to worship God "as expounded in the Vedanta." The title-deed of the Brahmo Samaj building erected by him bears witness to his attitude towards Vedantic doctrines. Thus as he began an all-round fight against superstitions and bigotry indigenous to the country; he also assailed the superstitions and fanaticism imported into India by the foreign propagandists. This fight with Brahmanical orthodoxy led to the revival of Vedicism in Bengal. The reformers began to look for the genesis of the Hindu institutions from the fountain-head of Indo-Aryan Culture—the Veda. In it they saw as there is no mention of Hindu idols currently worshipped, also there is no sanction of burning of widows in the funeral pyre of their husbands known as—Sati! It is evident that the sentence that is to be found in the funeral hymn of Rig-Veda (X. 16) has been deliberately falsified by Raghunandan in order to give a Vedic sanction to this nefarious custom. This discovery startled the educated Hindus. Hitherto many have been burning their widows conscientiously believing that it is the order of the revealed scripture. But at last it was found out that good people have been humbugged by this falsification! Prof. Max Mueller said that it was a proof of the unscrupulousness

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2. He anticipated Swami Vivekananda in this aggressive attitude towards the foreign critics.

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of the priesthood. But hard words break no bones, says the old adage. Wherefrom comes the unscrupulousness of the priesthood is the question. An Englishman named Thomson counted that while there have been about a thousand and a half cases of *Sati* in Banaras, the seat of orthodoxy, there was nearly three thousand and-a-half cases in Bengal.[3] We must look into Historical-Materialism of the country for an answer.

The "Viramitrodaya" which is the Smriti or legislation of Banaras does not sanction it. This legislation is based on Mitakshara. Yet the legislation in vogue in Banaras does not give a widow's right to a sonless deceased man's wife. On the contrary, the Bengal School of Hindu law called Dayabhaga of Jimutavahana gives a widow's right in the form of life-interest to the widow of a sonless person. Further, this right can be sold out by the widow in lieu of cost of maintenance, pilgrimages, etc. Hence, the legal provision was gall and wormwood to the reversioners of the deceased person. A way must be found out to avoid the effects of the unpleasant law. The priesthood must find a solution to it. Hence, the great *Nibandha-writer* Raghunandan was requisitioned to find out a solution. He ransacked the scriptural texts but did not find any answer to his query. The nibandhakar Paithinasi and Apararka of the latter middle ages have sanctioned it. But the Smritis and the Srutis are silent about the custom. As no Hindu will abide by the decision of the nibandhakaras, hence Raghunandan had to forge the Rig-vedic sentence which says, "All those women, well-dressed ascend the room in front of them." But he forged it as, "enter the fire-room" i.e., the pyre; (vide Suddhitattva). Thus a way was found to get rid of unpleasant widows! Of course, Raghunandan has said only those who are willing to enter the pyre of their husbands may do it. The economic interpretation of this historical institution is the explanation to this awful rite. Raghunandan had to cater to the vested interests of the country.

His second dictum is that in the Kaliyuga there are only two Varnas: the Brahmans and the Sudras. This is an adaptation of

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3. Vide Kane: "History of Dharmasastras." Vol. II, Part. II.

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Nagoji Bhatta's dictum. It has no basis in any of the religious scriptures. But strange to say that Raghunandan had the shamefacedness to formulate that dictum when *Ballalacharita* written during his life-time at the Court of the raja of Navadwipa says that seeing the Brahmans and Kshatriyas disconsolate, King Vallala appointed the Vaidik Brahmans to look into their family records of descent. Thereupon, he reconferred Brahmanhood and Kshatriyahood on them. This news throws some light on the social history of Bengal of bygone days. There is a tradition that the Varendra Brahmans once threw off their sacred threads but retook it again from the hands of the Vaidik Brahmans.[4] The "Brahman Sarvasya" of Haludha, a judge at the court of Lakshmansena says, that "The Rahri and Varendra Brahmans are Tantrikas." Perhaps the Brahmans and the Kshatriyas took to tantrik practices before the rise of Brahmanical Kingdoms of the Suras, the Varmanas and the Senas. This perhaps accounts for the tradition that five vedic Brahmans were imported by King Adisura of Bengal to officiate in his *Jagna*.

Again, the shamefaced lie of Raghunandan and his ilk of Nibandhakaras is exposed by the fact of the existence of the royal dynasties of Orissa, Vijayanagara, Rajputana, etc. where they arrogate to themselves as being of solar and lunar Kshatriya lineages. Hence this dictum is only a Brahmanical caste effrontery of the Nibandhakaras of North India when there had been no Hindu King to check their class-arrogance. The Nibandhas written during the Mohammedan rule in India betray the attempt of proving class superiority of the priesthood at the expense of others. Class-character of these neo-Smritis is manifest through and through.

Since, reading of the fact about the secret of ostracism of many of the Brahmans of Bengal as evinced in the Select Committee's report, and since the publication of *Chachnamah* describing the Arab invasion of Sindh and of *Tabakati Nasiri* dealing with the Turkish Conquest of Bengal, where it is said that some Brahmans helped the foreigners indirectly in their invasion, the question arises in the mind of the present-writer that, whether these

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4. Vide D. C. Sen: "Bangobhasa-O-Sahitya" (in Bengalee).

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Nibandhakaras were immune from the gold of the Moslem rulers! Through a life-long experience of the present-writer in various phases of movement for national independence, it has been discovered that the man who indulges in extreme radical slogans either from the left or the right direction, is after all an agent of the enemy.[5] Extremes meet together as extreme radicalism tantamounts to counter-revolutionary action.[6] The extreme conservatism and class-arrogance of the writers of the Nibandhas have not helped the Hindu society, rather it has helped in weakening it and thereby strengthening Islamic rule. The time has come in independent Bharat to thrash out the precepts of these books and to expose them if they are not conducive to the growth of healthy Indian nationality.

To Rammohan Roy devolved the task of exposing the forgeries and fabrications of the exploiting priesthood. He set the ball of studying the ancient religious texts rolling and the Renaissance of India came in time. To Rammohan, New India owes a great debt; no amount of sectarian sophistry can make us forget that he was the Prophet of New India. The regeneration of India began from him.

Now-a-days it is talked about that whether Rammohan Roy had any political inclination. His biographers say that British Government suspected him. But it is also in record that seeing the independent Indian States falling down before the onslaught of the British Government, he used to say that, the Indians after getting modern education will be able to cope with them. For that reason, he sided with Macaulay in spreading English education in India. The same view has been expressed by Karl Marx regarding India in much latter days. Prof. Jadunath Sarkar once told the present-writer at Patna that, Sister Nivedita expressed the view to him that the right place of Rammohan Roy would have been by the right side of Ranjit Singh; instead of that, he engaged himself in finding a religious society! It is a debateable question, that whether the social

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5. Vide "Moscow Trials" in the history of Russian Communist Party.
6. Vide Lenin's, "Left-handed radicalism a children's disease."

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environment of the Sikh Kingdom would have permitted Rammohan Roy, an admirer of French revolutionary philsophy to be of any service to the semi-feudal and tribal rule of Ranjit Singh. The fight between the Indian States and the British was the repetition of the history of eight hundred years ago. It was the struggle between the two systems.

Feudalism has lasted too long in Indian History. In the early part of nineteenth century it was the fight between the Mahrattas and the Sikhs on the one side and the English on the other for the supremacy on India. But the English were then a democratic homogeneous nation having all the advantages of modern Civilization. On the other hand, the Indian States were ill-assorted Kingdoms composed of diverse tribes and peoples only kept under subjugation by despotic rule. They fell like a house of cards before the onslaught of the British. Rammohan Roy as the student of the French Encyclopædists understood all these difficulties. To him the ideal was not to bolster up these ill-assorted States whose downfall he could not prevent, but to create a rationalist India. Hence, he introduced his French revolutionary spirit of "liberty, equality and fraternity" in religious and social reforms. Education in modern lines was his desideratum for India. Rammohan Roy was sensitive to the ideal of freedom of man and nations. He sympathized openly with the Italian revolutionaries. The Fillipinos sent a printed address written in Spanish language, congratulating him as a lover of freedom of man. Thus what an extraordinary lover of freedom of man he was. And this brain was used in his later days to resuscitate the Indians by not to bring them backward but to march them forward. Truly, Swami Vivekananda has said that Rammohan Roy was the first man to start the dynamism of Hindu society again. He was again an Indian expansionist.

Rammohan Roy gave the basis of an eclectic religion. He was an universalist in the matter of religion. His religion was not a tribal or national one. His religion had an universal character. It is said that it has been computed in America that among those who preached universal religion in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Rammohan Roy stood sixth in the order of precedence of them. Rammohan Roy was the product of the

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dialectics of Indian history. The liberal section of the newly arisen *bourgeoisie* supported him in his efforts at reformation, while the grandees and the Conservative section were against him. They under Raja Radhakanta Deb established "Dharma Sabha" and opposed him. They were for the burning of the widows in the funeral pyre of their husbands and the *status quo* of religio-social polity. In this matter, it is a pure case of economic interpretation of history. With the abolition of *Sati* and other religious and social reforms attempted by Rammohan Roy, the vested interests will get a severe blow. These will injure the economic interests of a large portion of the Hindu society. Hence, the vested interests were stultified at this attempt at reformation. Here, we should not forget that economic interpretation of history and ideological interpretation of history meet in the common ground—interests.[7] Impelled by the motive of self-preservation, they rallied around Radhakanta Deb in the Dharma Sabha. Thus arose a dialectical contradiction to Rammohan's thesis. Failing to get the Prohibitory Act passed in 1829, A.D. of the Governor-General Lord Bentinck, stopped in India, they appealed to the British Privy Council for the revocation of the Act![8] This evinces clearly the mouthpiece of which class Rammohan was. He was the product of the bourgeois class, and was the mouthpiece of the liberal section of it which wanted to reform the society. Class-struggle between the two sections was waged in the religious and social planes. Here is to be noted that he tried to stop polygamous marriage of the *Kulins,* and fought for the legal rights of Hindu women. He pointed out that the current law regarding a woman's right to property of her husband was unjust and against the ancient sastra. He said that the widow of a deceased person is a coparcener with his sons in the property left by him. Further, he pointed out that the ancient Hindu Sastra was more kind to the females than the European laws.[9] But on account of the faulty decisions of

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7. Lester F. Ward: "Applied Sociology"; Boudin, "Marxism."
8. This appeal was rejected by the Council.
9. Vide Nagendranath Chattopadhyaya: "Life of Rammohan Roy", 4th ed., p. 377.

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the annotators the women are being deprived of that good fortune. Then he pleaded for the widows, and he said that unjust proprietary law is one of the causes of *Sati* and polygamy. He added that burning of the widows was proportionately greater in Bengal than in other provinces of India.[10] Only blind faith and old practice are not the causes of this numerical superiority of Sati in Bengal.

Then he agitated against the custom of taking money (*Pan*) by the bride's father. He says, "In the practice of our contemporaries a daughter or a sister is often a source of emolument to the Brahmans of less respectable caste, (who are most numerous in Bengal) and to the Kayasthas of high caste..... Such Brahmans and Kayasthas, I regret to say, frequently marry their female relations to men having natural defects or worn out by old age, and disease, merely from pecuniary considerations, whereby they either bring widowhood upon them soon after marriage or render their lives miserable. They not only degrade themselves by such cruel and unmanly conduct, by violating entirely express authorities of Munoo and all other ancient law givers, a few of which I here quote".[11]

Another work of Rammohan Roy was to publish and translate into Bengalee the old work of Mritunjayacharya named *Vajrasuchi.* It is a terrible polemic against Caste-system and the slashing of the pretensions of the Brahman Caste. It quotes from the sastra that he who knows Parabrahman is a Brahman. As regards widow-remarriage, the biographer says that there is nothing on record to prove that he supported it. But he used to speak in defence of marriage of girl-widows among his friends. There was a rumour at last that after his return from England he will introduce widow-remarriage.[12]

From these movements of Rammohan Roy it is evident that the liberal section of the society were looking up to him for abolition of obnoxious customs. The intelligentsia of the society had

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10. Vide Op. cit. p. 378
11. English work of Rammohan Roy, Pt. I, p. 367.
12. Vide N. N. Chattopadhayaya, Op. cit. p. 384.

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then been cognizant of the evil effects of these customs. They were looking up to him for their support.

Then Rammohan Roy supported the spread of education on occidental line. He opined that the people of this country cannot much be benefitted by the study of classical literatures, viz., Sanskrit and Persian. His letter addressed to Lord Amherst in 1823 evinces his attitude to this problem. He says: "We find that the Government are establishing a Sanskrit School under Hindoo Pundits to import such knowledge as is already current in India. This seminary similar in character to those which existed in Europe before the time of Lord Bacon, can only be expected to load the minds of youth with grammatical niceties and metaphysical distinctions of little or no practical use to the possessors or to society.... I beg your Lordship will be pleased to compare the state of science and literature in Europe before the time of Lord Bacon with the progress of knowledge made since he wrote..... But as the improvement of the native population is the object of the Government, it will consequently promote a more liberal and enlightened system of instruction, embracing, Mathematics, Natural philosophy, Chemistry, Anatomy, with other useful sciences which may be accomplished with the sums proposed by employing a few gentlemen of talent and learning, educated in Europe and providing a College furnished with necessary books, instruments, and other apparatus. In representing this subject to your Lordship, I conceive myself discharging a solemn duty which I owe to my countrymen".[13]

Again, apart from the introduction of *Vedantic* Studies, he translated five of the *Upanishads*, and he established a *"Veda* School"[14] for the study of the *Vedas* in 1920. The idea of starting this school was to preach Hindu Monotheism.[15] Apart from this, he was the first person to introduce an easy style of composition in Bengalee language. He also wrote a grammar of the same tongue called "Grammar of the *Gaudiya* language." Again he intro-

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13. Quoted from N. N. Chattopadhayaya, pp. 389-390.
14. He anticipated the wish of Swami Vivekananda in this matter.
15. N. N. Chattopadhyaya, p. 392.

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duced the European system of punctuation in Bengalee writing. Thus he wrote books on geography, astronomy and geometry in Bengalee language.

Rammohan also engaged himself in politics. He did not see any antagonism between religion and politics, rather he considered both as necessary duties of man. It is said that he was the fountain-head of all political movements of his time[16]. In a short sketch of his life-history written at the request of an English friend of his while he was in England, he says, "At the age of sixteen I wrote a book against Hindu idolatry. This engendering difference of opinion with the relatives I left home and started on travelling. I visited some of the provinces of India. At last, the intensive hatred against the British rule impelled me to travel in countries outside India".[17] But later on, he understood that British rule will be of much good service to India. Yet, he was not negligent in circulating political knowledge through papers in Bengalee and Persian languages to his fellow-countrymen. Again, he fought for freedom of the Press in 1823. Then he sympathised with the freedom movement of foreign countries. He gave a public dinner at Town Hall when he heard that constitutional government has been established in Spain in 1821. Hearing the defeat of the revolutionaries of Naples he declined an interview to his English friend as his "Mind is depressed by the late news from Europe." To him he further wrote, "From the late unhappy news, I am obliged to conclude that I shall not live to see liberty universally restored to the nations of Europe, and Asiatic nations, especially those that are European Colonies, possessed of a greater degree of the some blessing than what they now enjoy. Under these circumstances I consider the cause of the Neapolitans as my own, and their enemies as ours. Enemies to liberty and friends of despotism have never been, and never will be ultimately successful."[18]

Again, he sympathized with the French Revolution of 1830. Indeed, he broke one of his ankle-bone off Natal harbour while

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16. *Ibid*: P. 410.
17. Quoted from Chattopadhayaya, p. 6.
18. Quoted from Chattopadhayaya, pp. 417-418.

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trying to pay homage to the French tri-colour flag on his way to England. What a broad vision and freedom-loving heart had this reformer when anything that savours "foreign" has been a taboo. Did he not broaden the vision of the myopic Indian intellectuals? Was he not truly the founder of New India? His broad foresight is also evinced by the plea that the Indian Penal laws must be codified on uniform basis. Of course, it was done later on. Then he visualized the day when Hindu and Moslem laws of inheritance will be united as one. This will unify the people of India. The Indian Succession Act is helping the ideal, but the unification is a matter of growth of enlightenment and common economic interests of all the sects. Then he was for permanent settlement that has been made between the Government and the landlord. Also he was for the right of the tenant-peasant on his land. In this way, he forecasted lots of reformatory plans which came up later on, and in twentieth century for discussion and solution. Thus, he was for a bourgeois-democratic change of the country. The lesson of the French bourgeois-democratic revolutionary thought was not lost in him.

The most noticeable work of Rammohan Roy was his preaching of universal religion. The idea that there is truth in every historical religion arose in the occidental world when the prominent European nations were expanding themselves and founding colonial-imperialism. To the Christian believing in Athanasian creed, there is no salvation for anyone else. To the Mohammedan there is no other alternative but offering Koran or Sword to a Kaffir. The orthodox Moslem does not believe that there is truth in other religion. Moslem history evinces that. To the Moslems, religion is a hand-maid of politics, hence he cannot but be illiberal to persons of other persuasion, though there is a passage in Koran which says that Allah has sent his guide (Habib) in every age to every clime, and those people will be saved by following the precepts of those guides.

Naturally, the idea of universal religion dawned in the mind of some of the most advanced nations of the occident after they came in contact with other peoples. Again, it arose amongst those who were not believers of the Athanasian creed. It arose among

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the advanced rationalist thinkers of the Theistic Churches. For this reason, Rammohan Roy and his latter-day disciples allied themselves with the Theists of the English-speaking-world—the Unitarian Church of England and of the U. S. A. Yet, it must be acknowledged that he went further than the Unitarians. His religion was an eclectic one in the sense that he saw that the essence of every religion was the same, the belief in one incorporeal personal God.

Rammohan Roy introduced Monotheism in modern India. He interpreted the *Brahma-Sutras* in a way to suit his monotheism. Why? That is the question. The Hindu mind has never conceived Monotheism of the Shemitic type. That never has been possible in Indian environment. The desert God who is the lord of hosts and a jealous one, is inconceivable in Indian *milieu* where the climate is comparatively softer and the soil is fertile. The comfortable life of the Indo-Aryan sages gave rise to Pantheism of the Upanishads. From the tribal gods of the Rig-veda to Pantheism of the Upanishads developed among the democratic tribes, there was no scope for a fighting and despotic lord of hosts to evolve.

When the Brahma-sutras were written sometime between the rise of the Vakataka and Gupta empires, the idea of corporeal and incorporeal, transcendent and immanent *Parabrahman* was evolved. Imperial necessities made the appearance of this book which still today is the scripture of all the God-believing Hindu sects. It was the dialectics of Historical-Materialism that brought out the philosophy contained in this book. But the dialectics of history demanded something more. From the perusal of epigraphic records we find that with the emergence of Vakataka and Bharasiva rules in Central India, temples of Shiva were being erected all over the country, and Vedic sacrifices were being performed by the Brahmans who were getting donations of lands and villages. Again, during the subsequent Gupta rule, more temples of Vishnu and his consort Sri Lakshmi and Mahalaksmi were built than that of any other gods. In these temples elaborate ceremonies of worship used to take place. The gods were being worshipped like the kings in their courts. In this age, the religious conceptions of the Indo-Aryans both of the Brahmanical

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and Buddhist sections underwent fundamental changes. We have discussed about this change elsewhere.

The epigraphic records testify that the temples were getting donations of villages for their support, their priests were getting lands and *agrahaia* villages for their maintenance. In this way, big vested interests have been created around these idol-temples. Vadarayana was not incognisant of this fact. Before this age, Jaimini's attempt at rehabilitation of Vedicism has proved to be a failure. It has been an anachronism in Indian society of the time. Dialectical contradictions did not permit anything else. The Buddhists and the Brahmanists were vying with each other in building of images in the temples. The Buddhists went further in idolatory than the Brahmanists. It is the legacy they left to India.

Vadarayana knowing that interest dies hard in human breast, sanctioned that the ignorant person may worship in symbol (*Pratik*). Later on, Sankara defended it. Thus a loop-hole was left in the Vedanta text which enabled all sorts of idolatry to enter the body-politic of the Brahmanical religion. Rammohan Roy was cognisant of it. It is said that he has acknowledged by quoting Srimat Bhagabata (3.29) that for the weak and ignorant persons worship through symbols may be permissible until he is cognizant that God is everywhere. But he again quotes that, "He who worships ignorantly idol by discarding me who is omnipresent, makes sacrifice with ashes". Finally, we find him fighting the Brahman pandits that if the Moslems, the Sikhs, the Dadupanthis, etc., can worship God without images why not the Hindus be able to do it.

Rammohan Roy has been misunderstood by the orthodox people as well by his latter-day followers. It is a pity that he has been made a sectarian leader. He never cut himself off from the parent society and its streams of thought. He would stare in his grave if he were called a "non-Hindu" as some of his present-day followers are bragging. His Tantric Guru Harihārananda wrote the *Mahanirvana* Tantra, a liberal text advocating social reforms in the matter of marriage. It is said that Rammohan was regarded as an "Avadhuta" by the Tantrikas.[19]

19. N. N. Chattopadhayaya—"Life of Rammohan Roy" (in Bengalee).



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We have discussed so much about Rammohan Roy in order to understand the latter-day developments of the country. "Like the pearls in a string" the development of culture of modern India begins from Rammohan Roy and continues to present-day. The dialectics of Historical-Materialism laying aside contradiction after contradiction is going forward to the goal of synthesis which is resuscitated New Indo-Aryandom.

## SUCCESSORS OF RAMMOHAN ROY

The successor of Rammohan Roy in the religious reform movement was Pandit Ram Chandra Vidyabagish, reputed to be a brother of Swami Hariharananda. He was struggling with a forlorn hope against the darkness that was all around him. Then came Devendranath Tagore, the son of Dwarkanath, one of the staunch friends of Rammohan. In his young days after the demise of his father Debendranath joined the Brahmo Samaj. It is said that when Ram Chandra initiated Devendranath, he got hold of his hands and wept. It is analogous with the weeping of Sri Chaitanya at the courtyard of Srivas! Both of them wept at the condition of the people of the country. Darkness prevailed all around. Superstitions and necromancies were current in the name of Indo-Aryan religion. It is said that in those days of cimmerian darkness of the Hindu mind, *Satyapir* (*Satyanarain*) *Panchali* used to be read at the time of the Sraddha ceremony of a dead person.[20] A devoted disciple of Rammohan later on wrote the following in "Tattabodhini Patrika": "Since long time the cultivation of *Vedic* learning was defunct. The Brahman Pandits got startled in hearing the mantras, Brahmana, slokas, sutras and their Bhasyas of the Vedas and the Vedanta. The Bhattacharyas and the Goswamis were non-plussed in hearing the slokas of the Upanishads quoted by Rammohan Roy in support of his Brahman Theory." It was Rammohan Roy who drew the attention of the public regarding the contents of the *Vedas* and the *Vedanta*. It is no wonder that a sincere believer of the

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20. Vide Gurudas Varman: "Sri Sri Ramakrishna Charita"—Pt. I, p. 321.

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Vedantic doctrine of Parabrahman should weep on account of the darkness around.

Then came Debendranath Tagore as the leader of the religious reform movement. He followed only the Vedantic trend in Rammohan's religious thought. At that time, a society composed of cultural *elite* of the liberal bourgeoisie viz., Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, Dr. Rajendralala Mitra, and others formed the "Tattabodhini Sabha" to discuss about the Vedantic doctrine independent of Brahmo Samaj which was hated by the public. But later on, it was amalgamated with the Brahmo Samaj. This resulted in the severance from the Sabha of those above-mentioned learned men. This shows the trend of thought among the middle class intelligentsia. Dialectical contradiction to the original thesis of orthodoxy has set in the bourgeois society. Religious exploiters have so long entrenched themselves in orthodoxy calling it the *Sanatana Dharma* of the Indo-Aryans; but the Vedantic sledge-hammer of Rammohan began to throw them out of their roost. A section of the middle class was awakening out of their stupor and was getting cognizant of the past culture of bygone days. Thereby they were becoming liberal and getting conscious of their role in the society. It is said that one time when Debendranath was its minister, about 500 persons were enrolled as members. As such, they had not to severe their social connections with the orthodox society. They went there only to pray.

Debendranath Tagore comes from a rich family which was ostracized long ago on account of its *Javana*-contact. They are called *Pirali Brahmans* who intermarry among themselves. They are a caste by themselves. The father of Debendranath was a merchant exporting Indigo and silk. At last he became the manager of the Salt-agent of the English East India Company and amassed money.[21] His father Dwarkanath later on, started a business firm under the name of "Kerr Tagore & Co." Hence, the rich Tagores are a product of the British rule. As a rich

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21. Vide Shivnath Sastri: "Ramtanu Lahiri and Bengal society of his time" (in Bengalee), p. 67.

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family they belonged to the upper section of the newly arisen bourgeoisie.

As Debendranath only followed the Vedantic trend of Rammohan, he eschewed out his universalism and eclectism. The articles "Vaidantic doctrine vindicated" manifest the trend. Thus arose a contradiction to the thesis of Rammohan. But at that time other things were going on at a rapid pace. The bourgeoisie that was not dependent on English support was getting on aggressive in every way. A Scotchman named David Hare came to Calcutta for business. Later on, he gave up the business and busied himself in elevating the condition of the Indians. He himself says: "A few years after my arrival in this country, I was enabled to discover that nothing but education was requisite to render the Hindus happy and I exerted my humble abilities to further the interests of India".[22] David Hare was instrumental in founding the Hindu College. The school society also owed its inception from him. Rammohan Roy helped him in his efforts. He also founded the Hare School which exists still to-day under the protection of the Government. From these educational institutions educated youngmen began to appear who made their marks on the society.

In the course of time a group of youngmen turned out from these institutions who began to write books in Bengalee and in English. They started associations and debating societies where discussions took place on education, literature, society and religion.

## RISE OF YOUNG BENGAL

We have seen beforehand that a group of youngmen already appeared on the Indian horizon who were talking in terms of occidental culture. In connection with this spread of education appeared a half-European and half-Indian youngman named Henry Louis Vivian Derozio. He was still within his teens when he was appointed as a teacher in the Hindu College. The Renaissance Movement owes much to this intellectual prodigy. He was an Indian patriot to the core. The following poem on India in his

22. The Government Gazette, 21st Feb., 1831.

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English poetical book named, "The Fakir of Janghira" illustrates the claim. He wrote thus:

"My country! in thy days of glory past
A beauteous halo circled round thy brow,
And worshipped as a deity thou wast—
Where is that glory, where that reverence now
* * * * *
Well let me dive into the depths of time,
And bring from out the ages that have rolled
A few small fragments of these wrecks sublime.
Which human eye may never more behold;
And let the guerdon of my labour be,
My fallen country! One kind wish for thee"![23]

His wish was fulfilled; indeed he fished out a few fragments of pearls which by its effulgence created young Bengal. He worked for 5 or 6 years from 1926 to 1931. He died at an extremely early age of twenty-three. His role in the history of Bengal was like that of the French Encyclopaedists. He instilled an all-round enquiring spirit in the minds of his students. Derozio was a rationalist thinker. He instilled rationalism in the minds of his students. As a result, his disciples wanted to lay axe at the roots of both Hinduism and Christianity. One of his students who later on became an orthodox Christian, Rev. K. M. Banerjea bears witness to this mentality in his autobiography.

"Down with Hinduism"! "Down with orthodoxy" was the cry raised by this band of young intellectuals.[24] They even openly defied Hindu Conventions in the matter of eating and drinking. They paraded their defiance openly on the streets and parks. Indian Social history does not record such an open defiance to orthodoxy in any other province. Thus the youthful intellectuals are getting radical. The one thing that speaks highly of this group that instructed by Derozio they never had laxity of morals in their daily life. To speak the truth, to answer straightforwardly were their ideal. They were worshippers of truth. Those who

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23. Quoted from Sri Jogesh Chandra Bagal: "Bengal of nineteenth century", p. 121 (in Bengalee).
24. "Life of Ramgopal Ghose" by A. Basu.

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entered the Government service were strictly against taking bribe. This set an example in the country.

Yet, conservative guardians got frightened and brought about the dismissal of Derozio from the Hindu College. The standard of education of the College deteriorated. An admirer of Derozio writes on the 5th June under the caption, "A friend to the College" the following article: "He infused into the infants the sternness of manhood, and taught them to sacrifice home and every kindred tie at the altar of Truth.....the Rubicon, that great moral barrier of Hindu refinement was crossed, and the triumph of reason and philosophy over ignorance and superstition may now be regarded as fixed and irrevocable. Those who benefitted most by his instruction have brought themselves conspicuously forward some editing respectable periodical, other aiding by contribution; while a third class, moved by a cogenial spirit, have spread themselves abroad and are benefitting their fellow-countrymen, devoting thus not only their heads but their purse in the glorious cause of moral improvement".[25] The Renaissance of Bengal is much indebted to him.

Thus contradictions to conservatism were going on at a rapid pace. From Rammohan's rationalist theism to the rationalistic atheism of the next generation was one step. His introduction of the free enquiring mind of the French Encyclopaedists was taken up by the latter generation in Bengal. They even did not forget the lesson of the French Revolution. Some of Rammohan's disciples of latter days, hoisted the French Tri-colour flag on the tops of the Ochterlony monument commemorating the day of the fall of Bastille! Derozio's disciples were not only undermining orthodoxy by bringing rationalism to the broad section of the middle-class, they even assailed the actions of the Government in Vitriolic language. The speech of Dakshina Ranjan Mukhopadhyaya against the evil doings of the Government made the "Friend of India" exclaim, that if any one else other than the English King had given that speech, then the speaker must have been punished with banishment.[26]

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25. Quoted by Bagal: Op. cit. pp. 133-135.
26. Bagal: P. 138 (He wrote a few pamphlets in support of few remarks on certain Draft Acts, commonly called "Black Acts").

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Another important student of Derozio was Ram Gopal Ghosh.[27] He was a prosperous businessman with a firm of his own and conducting it with integrity. He was noted for his heterodox views on religious and social matter. There is a tradition that once his mother sent the *Naibedhyas* (offering) of the Durga-goddess as presents to the Brahmans. But they all refused it by saying that they would not touch the presents of that man with heterodox mode of life. Thereupon, the mother of Ramgopal cursed her fate that she has borne such a son. Hearing it, Ramgopal sarcastically exclaimed: "You have yourself sent the presents but not as the mother of Ramgopal. Put one *mohar* on each plate as *Dakshina* and sent it back." The mother acted accordingly and the presents did not return any further!

Ramgopal started a strong political agitation against the Government. "We don't want the domination of the white Brahmans" was the cry of this group. His celebrated lecture in support of what was called as Black Act[28] by the Europeans made him famous. He was called the "Demosthenes of India". Thus, the radical section of the bourgeoisie was getting aggressive in its attitude towards the alien government. The dialectics of Historical Materialism of the society has moved further from the days of Rammohan Roy.

In the meantime, the Brahmo Samaj was getting strength. Debendranath was now being aided by Rajnarain Bose, Ananda Chandra Vedantavagish, Akshaya Kumar Datta and others. Meanwhile Keshab Chandra Sen, a scion of an old family of Calcutta joined the Brahmo movement. His ancestors amassed money during the early days of the English East India Company. His grandfather Ram Kamal Sen worked under various English businessmen and at last became the cashier of Bank of Bengal. He was noted for being a compiler of an Anglo-Bengalee dictionary. Keshab Chandra Sen was a clerk in the Bank of Bengal. This youngman had the capacity of speaking English fluently.

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27. See *Purana Katha* by Monmathanath Ghosh.
28. The Act brought in Governor-General's Legislative Assembly in 1849-50 intended to bring the Europeans under the criminal court in case of a dispute with the Indians. Hence the Europeans called it "Black Act."

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## ATMIYA SABHA

Akshaya Kumar Datta who was a *litterateur* and a writer of scientific books in Bengalee, was a rationalist to the core.[29] His rationalism made him a deist. He established the *Atmiya Sabha* by enrolling the youngmen of the Samaj.

That was a momentous period in Bengal's social history. While the rich and conservative persons were gravitating towards *Dharma Sabha,* the liberal men and the younger section of the Hindu society were visiting the Brahmo Samaj. There was antipodal differences between the both sections of the society. The rising section of the middle class was for the Brahmo Samaj with its program of reforms. Class-conflict between the vested interests and the middle class with no vested interest at stake was being carried on in intellectual plane. But it soon descended to the plane of actual reality.

Debendranath appointed Keshab Chandra as one of the ministers of the church. This is itself regarded as a heterodox action. Keshab Chandra belonged to the Vaidya Caste. According to Raghunandan and Ballalacharita they are regarded as Sat-Sudras. Indeed in some parts of East Bengal they are regarded as Sudras. But according to the time-honoured custom, it is only a Brahman who can be a religious preacher. Further, Keshab Chandra and the younger men of the Atmiya Sabha were getting radical in the matter of social reforms. Even they contracted some intercaste marriages from 1864. Some of the Brahman youngmen of the Samaj threw off their sacred threads. All these heterodox actions aroused the conservative section of the Samaj. They remonstrated with Debendranath who was the head minister (Pradhanacharya). Debendranath reinstated a Brahman as a minister in place of Keshab Chandra. This set fire ablaze in the blood of the young radicals. Most of the younger section walked out of Samaj under the leadership of Keshab Chandra. They formed a rival church under the name of Brahmo Samaj of India.

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29. Towards the end of his life he turned from Deism to Atheism.

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## KESHAB CHANDRA SEN

That the dialectical contradictions of Historical Materialism is involved in this split, is apparent here. As said above, at the time political agitation demanding equal treatment from the hands of the alien Government was in full swing. Those youngmen who in the Company of Ramgopal Ghose were shouting, "We do not want domination of white Brahmans," would not tolerate a dark-skinned Brahman to be one of the heads of their church. Those who were for the eradication of the racial line in the matter of Government between the alien rulers and the indigenous subject people, would not tolerate domination in any form in their religious and social matters. Thus the contradictions between Brahmanical vested interests and egalitarian middle class of the radical type, snapped the bond between the two sections.

In the meanwhile, Rajnarain Bose has written his book on "Superiority of Hinduism." Again, in another book, called, "This age and the previous one", (Ekal O Sekal)[30] he pointed out what outlandish customs and manners are surreptitiously entering the Hindu society. Thus from eclectic Monotheism of Rammohan Roy to Hindu Monotheism which is regarded as superior to any other religion, an antithesis in the form of a great hiatus has arisen. The younger section though fighting tooth and nail against Evangelical Christianity, were affected by English civilization. Keshab Chandra though was against Trinitarian Christianity, was influenced by the life of Jesus. The Christian steeple-fashioned tower at the front of the church of the Brahmo Samaj of India, attests to this anglisization of the minds of these people. The common people even to this day call it the "Girja (Church) of Keshab Sen". It is no wonder that Debendranath when invited once to perform divine service there exclaimed, "Thanks to Keshab Chandra who has erected a Christian monument."

The anglisization of the Indian mind came through Christian teaching in some respects. Like the case in China and Japan, Euro-

30. Both of these books were written in Bengalee.

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peanization of an oriental country comes through Christianity. It effects an ethnic change among the converts. Keshab Chandra's group was imbued with the idea of Unitarian Christianity. On the other hand, they rejected Evangelical interpretation of Christs' life; on the other hand, the books of Priestley, Channing, Theodore Parker and the Unitarian tracts influenced them. At this period of history of the Brahmo Samaj, Vedantic monotheism was forgotten by Keshab's group. They talked of Christ. Even Keshab's disciple Pratap Chandra Mazumder wrote his famous book called "Oriental Christ" thereby attesting their feeling regarding him. Of course, he depicted Christ in an Oriental garb in this book.

The Europeanizing influence in Brahmo Samaj of India was further evinced by adopting the title of "Reverend Bhai" by the missionary disciples of Keshab Chandra. It is a singular phenomenon that what Keshab Chandra preached was European Christianity minus the Athanasian creed in an Indian garb.

The Dialectics of Historical Meterialistic conditions of India demanded it. The dynamism of the Hindu Society manifested itself by throwing off a bulwark for self-defence in the shape of a rationalistic movement like the Brahmo Samaj. This movement from the very beginning was fighting on two fronts: Hindu orthodoxy and Christian onslaught. Indeed, for the preservation of the Hindu Society and the upkeep of the ethnic individuality, the rise of the Brahmo Samaj was a historical necessity. The race-capacity of the Hindus is manifest by this rise. The reforming Brahmo Samaj served the analogous function in the nineteenth century with the movement of Kabir, Nanak and the other *Santas* in the Mohammedan period of the Middle age. Swami Vivekananda perceived clearly the function of the reform movements like the Brahmo Samaj and Arya Samaj. But the Brahmos in general are not conscious of this roll. Many of them pride themselves as "non-Hindus" and assert that their "Culture" is different from that of the Hindus! Now-a-days it is the fashion to apply "Two-nation" theory in every nook and corner of the Indian people without enquiring into the import of the word "Culture."

But the free enquiring mind of the Young Bengal intellectuals

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received a check by the rise and popularity of Brahmo Samaj of India and by the magnetic personality of Keshab Chandra. It is a unique phenomenon that the book of Thomas Paine of America called, "The Age of Reason," in which he severely criticised Christianity was reprinted in India in the age of reason of Bengal! Poor Thomas Paine! the worker for American and French Revolutions lies buried unnoticed at New Rochelle in the State of New York. But the Bengal radicals did not forget him. In their struggle for intellectual freedom they brought him out of oblivion.[31]

Keshab Chandra gave an intellectual training amongst the youngmen. Free thought movement receded in the background. Instead, monotheistic belief and puritanism began to be installed in their minds. Then he inaugurated "Band of Hope" movement among the youngmen to eschew the evils of smoking and drinking, as with the spread of English education drinking has worked havoc among the educated persons of Bengal. The old inhibitions being lost, licence took the place of freedom. Hence, there was a necessity for the upkeep of social integrity to preach puritanism amongst the young persons. Then touring all over India for the spread of Brahmo Samaj movement, Keshab Chandra became an all-India leader. He was the best orator of his day. It is said that such a brilliant orator never ascended an English pulpit when he visited England. He lectured in Bengalee, Hindi and English. The eyes of young renaissant India turned on the Brahmo Samaj, as it hoped that national salvation would come through religious and social reformations.

Such was the unique position of Keshab Chandra in the society of the time that several times he was requisitioned by the leaders of the society to speak for them in defence against the attacks of the Europeans. Indeed, some of his lectures were political ones in the guise of religion. His famous lecture "Jesus Christ, Europe and Asia" was an answer to the attack against

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31. The reading of this book actuated the writer in 1912 to visit the house of Tom Paine in which he lies buried. The grave is lying in uncared for and in dilapidated condition, because he was an "atheist".

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the Bengalee people by an English Clergyman![32] But the middle class at that period did not think of independence of the country. They, as yet did not arrive in that economic stage engendering a political struggle with the British rulers. At that time, it was regarded that primary steps for national regeneration lie in religious and social reforms. Keshab's church was busy with both. The Brahmo Samaj of India broke away with caste-system; it introduced widow-remarriage in the Brahmo Society. But it went further than the proposal of Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar whose agitation for remarriage of girl-widows resulted in the widow-remarriage bill of 1856. According to the provision of this Bill, only a widow can be married to her fellow-casteman; but the enactment of Civil Marriage Bill, Sec. 3 of 1872 otherwise called, "Brahmo Marriage Bill" which was passed as the result of the agitation of the Brahmo Samaj of India, provided monogamy as well as intercaste-marriage. Even Keshab's Church abolished custom of seclusion of the women-folk of their Community. Thus, the Brahmo Samaj introduced such innovations in its community that seemed as outlandish to all. These reform programs were extremely irritating to the conservatives of the Hindu society. As a consequence, those youngmen who joined the Brahmo Samaj used to be thrown out of their houses by their family members and ostracized by the society at large. Thus, practically, a neophyte of a Brahmo met the same fate as a convert to Christianity with the exception that he could come back to the orthodox fold if he did not contract intercaste-marriage thereby violating *Sanatana* rule.

In this way, the Brahmo movement became the cynosure of liberal India. Of course, all educated men did not enroll themselves as the members of the Samaj but it set them athinking.

## OTHER REFORM MOVEMENTS

The impact of new English method of education with the dormant Indian mind has stirred the whole country. The impact bore

32. Pandit Shivnath Sastri told the present-writer about the genesis of this lecture. It was given at the request of the Bengalee leaders as a reply to an English clergyman's virulent attack on the Bengalees.

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fruits in other provinces as well. In Bombay and in Mahratta-speaking province arose a group of religious reformers who organized themselves into *Prarthana Samaj*. It approached the Samaj of Debendranath later on called the *Adi Brahmo Samaj*, after the secession of Keshab Chandra and his group from it. It did not abolish caste-system, neither put on outlandish habits like the Brahmo Samaj of India. Yet it is always regarded as the sister Church of the Bengal Brahmo Samaj. It made a stir in the Western region, but it was only a skin-deep as the conservative nature of the people of that region confines every radical movement on the surface only. There must be a socio-economic basis to this conservatism. Perhaps, as they have been a dominant people over India in the immediate past which resulted in the formation of a landed gentry and the absence of a broad middle class is accountable for this singular phenomenon. In the Panjab it created some stir amongst the local people, but it fell flat in general on account of the existence of a similar religion called Sikhism. But soon there arose a rival movement in the north in the form of *Arya Samaj* founded by an unique religious monk named Swami Dayananda Sarasvati.

In the meantime Liberal Bourgeoisie was getting more militant and assuming an aggressive tone in politics. Several youngmen of the middle class came back home after finishing their education in England. They began to take bolder attitude in politics. These youngmen with their friends in the country were thinking of starting a political association for the middle class of people.[33] Thus "India League" was formed. Later on, "Indian Association" was established. The ideal of this association was to preach "United India" in imitation of Joseph Mazzini's cry of *Italia uni*. Later on, all the associations were united to form the great *Indian National Congress* in 1884 A.D. as the repository of national aspirations.[34]

This development of Bengal middle class ideal naturally reacted in the Brahmo Samaj of India. A group named "Samadarshi"

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33. Pandit Shivnath Sastri's autobiography (in Bengalee), p. 227.
34. Surendranath Banerjea: "India in making."

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(Equalitarian) appeared within the Samaj.[35] They demanded a constitution for the Samaj. Then came the Cooch Behar Marriage in 1878 and the inevitable split between the older authoritarian group under the leadership of Keshab Chandra and the young equalitarians took place. The equalitarian group seceded from the Brahmo Samaj of India and formed the *Sadharan Brahmo Samaj* of India. They beforehand fought for a constitution of the Church. They did not want one man rule in the Church, they demanded the appointment of a representative committee to govern the Church.[36] It is noteworthy that the ultimatum to Keshab Chandra for a constitution of the Church was resolved upon in a meeting held at the hall of the Indian Association. Pandit Shivnath Sastri in his autobiography says, that the Indian Association and the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj were born like twin-brothers. The same group were in both the organizations, the work of the both was conducted in the same way.[37]

Thus the materialistic trends of the advanced section of the middle class is manifest here. The middle class was demanding democratic constitution from the Government, naturally the Brahmo section of the middle class demanded a democratic constitution for their church. In this matter, one of those youngmen who was in the factional fight says in his later days: "We had commenced to dream dreams of the future of our country which will realise as much in the personal purity and character of its children as in their social life and institutions and in the organisation of their State and the constitution of their government, the largest and highest ideal of freedom that moved us[38]." In this way, *paripassu* the development of the Bourgeoisie, there was another split in the Brahmo Samaj which so long was regarded as the advanced section of the class. It was a conflict within the class between the petty-bourgeois radical section which dreamt of freedom in the Social State and reflecting it also in the Political State, and

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35 to 37. S. N. Sastri: Op. cit. pp. 262; 229.

38. Bepin Chandra Pal: "Memoirs of Life and Time." (1857-1884), 1932. P. 343.

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the section which formed a vested interest in Church management in authoritarian garb.

In the meanwhile Surendranath Banerjea and Ananda Mohan Bose formed a *Student Association* to instruct the Student Community in political matters for national work. It is said that at one time the membership of the association reached one thousand. Fiery speeches on the life of J. Mazzini, the Italian nationalist who was then the romantic hero of revolutionary Europe, the revolutionary import of the rise of Vaishnavism of Bengal and of Sikhism of the Panjab, were delivered by Surendranath Banerjea from this association. Again, B. C. Pal says, "Keshab Chandra and the Brahmo Samaj had no doubt, preceded Surendranath in the leadership of Bengal. The Brahmo leader was able, therefore, to touch a comparatively small section of the rising youths of his country, Keshab Chandra's preachings affected a comparatively small section of the youthful intellectuals of his time".[39] Then he says, "For all these reasons, Surendranath's political propaganda gathered a much larger following than the religious and social revolt of Keshab Chandra Sen and the Brahmo Samaj."[40]

As a result, a whole generation of youngmen of the middle class irrespective of caste and creed, were trained to take up the task of nation-building in their later life. And it fulfilled its mission. Hence, Surendranath has been justly called the father of modern Bengal.

Thus from the British India Association, a political organization of the landed interests and aristocracy, to the Indian Association, a mouthpiece of the middle class, the Historical-Dialectical-Materialism of the country has traversed a long way. The Bourgeoisie is no longer fighting on religious and social planes, but it has begun to fight on political plane. The class-conscious Bourgeoisie is conducting its fight against the vested interests of the alien Government and its Indian hand-maid, the aristocracy.

## SWAMI DAYANANDA

Swami Dayananda was born in a Nagar Brahman family of

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39-40. Bepin Chandra Pal: *Ibid.*, pp. 234; 235.

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Guzerat. His original name was *Mulsonker.* When his family was providing for his marriage he fled the country and turned a monk. He studied Sanskrit literature. He was deeply versed in Vedic knowledge and came to a conclusion of his own. He overthrew idolatry, as well as Advaitic interpretation of the Vedanta-Sutras. Dayananda lived most of his time in North India. The socio-economic *milieu* of that region moulded his thought. As the impact of Islam on the Hindu Society of the time produced Sikhism, likewise the impact of Islam and the newly imported Christianity, impelled Dayananda to give a new interpretation of Hinduism. He gave a monotheistic interpretation of the Hindu scripture. He overthrew Sayana's interpretation of the *Veda,* and Sankara's interpretation of the Vedanta. He upheld, that, matter is co-eternal with Brahman. Hence the world is no illusion. His Parabrahman is a fighting God. Like the reform movements of the Moslem period, Dayananda's religious concepts were moulded by the local environment of the North. He acknowledged that the Veda is eternal and a revealed one. It preaches monotheism, the Parabrahman of which is not a philosophic abstraction but a fighting God, the lord of hosts. As such, all other religions are false. He argued that all other interpretations of the Hindu Scripture are erroneous, and the epigonous developments are to be rejected. All must go back to the Veda and Vedic rites. But these are to be such as interpreted by him. One God, one scripture, one law was his ideal. Thus it is evident that his interpretation of the Vedic lore was quite different from that of Rammohan. Dayananda ignored that Hinduism or the religious concepts of the Indo-Aryans had an evolutional basis, and that that evolutional process is still continuing. Thereupon, the occidental savants have classed Hinduism as an anthropological religion. The dialectical changes in every age of the Indo-Aryan religious experiences was thus ignored by him. Thereby he ignored the dynamism of the Indo-Aryan religious experiences. His religious concepts were the products of the dialectical antitheses of nineteenth century North-India.

Dayananda came to Calcutta and met the prominent leaders of the place. In a reminiscence of Ramakrishna Paramhansa, the

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writer says that when the former went to visit Dayananda he found him anxiously awaiting the promised visit of Keshab-chandra. But Keshab and Debendranath could not agree with the tenets of Dayananda. It is narrow for the Bengalee brain, and his attitude towards other religions was too uncharitable for Bengalee mentality of the time. Bengal bourgeoisie with its socio-economic relations with the peoples of other religions could not afford to be illiberal to the others. But the antithetical social *milieu* of the north made it to be taken up by the merchant classes having no connection with outside.

At present the Arya Samaj established by Swami Dayananda is capturing the middle classes of North-India and of the upper Gangetic Valley. Lately, through the efforts of the propagandists some of the peasants of the untouchable or depressed classes of Bengal have been enrolled into the membership of the Samaj. But its influence among the Bengalee intelligentsia has been nil so long.

## RAMAKRISHNA PARAMHANSA

At the time when the Brahmo religious reform movement is stirring the intelligentsia of the middle class, there lived a devotee of Brahman origin at Dakshineshwar. It is said that he experienced through his practical *Sadhana* in the religious fields of the conflicting sects of Bengal, that God is attainable through all the *Yanas* (paths) of religion. God is attainable to a devotee in incorporeal as well as in corporeal form, etc.

In his quest for religious devotion he used to visit all the celebrated leaders of the day. In this way he met Keshab-chandra, and both of them were attracted to each other. In the course of time, a band of house-holders and young boys of the middle class were attracted to him. One of these youngmen was Narendranath Datta, a staunch Brahmo and an enrolled member of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj. Gradually a band of devotees gathered around him which formed the nucleus of the future Ramakrishna sect.[41]

41. Late Pandit Shivnath Sastri of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj told the present-writer that Ramakrishna had the capability to form a group of his own.



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It is not in our purview to write about the origin of this sect, also the future quarrel between the disciples of Keshabchandra and Ramakrishna regarding the mutual interactions between these two great men. Here we have given a bird's-eye view of the dialectical process through which the thesis and antithesis were working in the nineteenth century social history of India. As Bengal was the first province to come under the political, economic and educational influence of the Occident, and as under the impact of these forces feudal influences in Bengal Society began to be weaned away and bourgeois-democratic social aligning began to arise, Bengal was in the vortex of cross-currents of thoughts. Antitheses i.e., contradictions began to crop up against the time-hallowed orthodoxy, followed by counter-antitheses till we reach the latter part of the nineteenth century. This process is still going on, as with the growth of an aggressive bourgeoisie, the antithetical fights were carried on in the political sphere. As result, dialectical contradictions in the forms of religious oppositions subsided and political antitheses took their place.

## COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARY TRENDS

While India was in the ferment of religious and intellectual awakening, there came Spiritualist movement from Europe. So long under the impact of scientific education the people were losing their belief in spooks and ghosts of folk-lore. But Spiritualism began to reinforce the belief in spooks and goblins. It took the semblance of truth because it was imported by the Europeans! It took the form of religious faith because it strengthened the Brahmanical belief in *Pretaloka.*

Every primitive people entertained beliefs in spooks, ghosts and goblins. The Rig-Vedic spirit called *Jatudhan* down to belief in disembodied *Pretas* and ghosts of folk-lore of latter days, all took new bases of life to revive orthodoxy. Thus orthodoxy found an ally in European spiritualism to buttress its ancient superstitious beliefs. Prof. Mach of Berlin University has called spiritualism as hobgoblin of Paganism[42]; but in India it has been a European fraud to befool the unthinking Indians.

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42. E. Mach: "The Science of Mechanics", 1907.

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Then about 1876 came Theosophy from Russia. It disclosed that the wonder-working yogis are living in the caves and jungles of Hindusthan. It says that there is a hierarchy of *mahatmas* and below them *adepts* in the astral world directing the destiny of mankind according to its *Karma*. In India there is an astral Mahatma living in the Himalayan Lodge who directs its destiny.

Theosophy identifies itself with the religion of each country it visits. In India it identifies itself with orthodox Hinduism known as "Brahmanism." It speaks of "Devachan" and "Pitrichan" in the next world where a man will go according to his Karma in this world. Also it speaks of transmigration of soul which will take birth according to the Karma of the deceased person. Then it defends everything of Hinduism. Further, it describes of weird tales of the spirits and their fate after their death. Thus, all these stories of spooks and weird tales attracted the youthful minds always in quest of new adventures. It also drew the credulous in its fold. It rejuvenated the decaying superstitions and beliefs of orthodoxy. After the sledge-hammer blows of the Christian missionaries and of the Indian reformers, orthodoxy heaved a sigh of relief when at last some Europeans came forward to defend their dying beliefs. Thus the *Sanatana-bad* got a new lease of life.

Simultaneously arose two new defenders from the womb of orthodoxy: Pandit Sasadhar Tarkachudamani and Paribrajak Krishnaprasanna Sen (later on Swami Krishnananda). They began to preach about *pauranic* Hinduism and justified every tenet and ceremony of orthodoxy. It is said that even the keeping of tuft of hair on the occiput (Sikha) was given a spiritual interpretation by Pandit Sasadhar. On the other hand, the Theosophists gave an "electrical" interpretation of it! The Theosophists said that keeping of long hair on the head and long beard will conserve electricity. It seems, that with them electricity was somewhat connected with Godhood!

Thus, a dialectical contradiction against reform movements began to take place. Pandit Shivnath Sastri says that with the rise of revivalist movement, the influence of the Brahmo Samaj on the mind of the people of the country began to wane. He says: "We

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began to feel that Keshabchandra Sen no longer remained the undisputed leader of young Bengal; there was no more a strong attraction of the youngmen towards him."[43] On the other hand, another Brahmo leader, Bepinchandra Pal says that the radical minded youngmen never took to Keshabchandra Sen on account of his mysticism. The opening of the political field by Surendranath Banerjea and Anandamohan Bose drew the youngmen away from socio-religious reforms to political reforms.[44] Pandit Shivnath Sastri acknowledges the new phenomenon: "Thousands and thousands of young hearts were elated with hopes of advancement and love of the country. As the youngmen turned their backs towards the Brahmo Samaj, they turned their faces towards politics and national advancement."[45] Thus, the reaction against reforms was not due to the preaching of the orthodox preachers, but it had a socio-economic basis. The Calcutta University is producing English-educated men in bushels. Some of them are getting Government jobs, some are not. Youngmen coming back from England are talking of political rights and privileges. And they have found eager minds to hearken their calls. The middle class is broad and strong enough to demand equality with alien rulers. Their hungry stomachs are no longer satisfied with old talks about widow-remarriage, prohibition of child-marriage, image-worship, etc. Surely they must have said that they did not believe in God who could not give them bread. The youth of the middle class wanted national progress thereby ensuring their own advancement. Hence mystic talks did not satisfy them any longer.

The revivalism of Pandit Sasadhar and others were not much of a force as admitted by Swami Vivekananda who himself has been attacked by the reformers as a revivalist and as such a reactionary, but there had been a historical-materialistic background behind it. The thesis of advancing India through religious and social reforms got a dialectical contradiction in the form of rise of advanced

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43. S. N. Sastri: "Ramtanu Lahiri and the Bengal Society of his time," (in Bengalee) P. 307.
44. Vide Autobiography of B. C. Pal, Pt. I.
45. S. N. Sastri: Op. cit. P. 308.

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movement for political reform. B. C. Pal, thus says: "Sir George Campbell was Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal during the early seventies. He was not friendly to the new English-educated middle class in the province. He thought that they were gradually becoming a menace to the British authority in the country."[46]

## BIRTH OF NATIONALISM

The educated middle class ushers in the new phase—the Phase of Nationalism. Out of the heat of froth and foam of reform and counter-reform wrangles, slowly emerged the spirit of *Nationalism.* The spirit of nationalism was never absent in the mind of the educated Bengal. Rammohan Roy was motivated by it to start his reform agitations. The Indian disciples of the French Revolution could not have been immune to the idea of nationalism. But the historical-materialistic *milieu* of the earlier periods of the nineteenth century was not congenial to its growth. There was no militant Bourgeoisie to realize the new spirit.

But with the growth of the intellectually militant bourgeoisie, Nationalism began to gain its momentum. Strangely, those who were dubbed as revivalists were the instruments of the growth of the national spirit. It was Bankimchandra, the immortal poet of the national song *Bande Mataram* who in his novels and in essays, began to instil the idea of nationalism in the minds of the youth. Some of the reformers have thrown the past overboard. There had been an intellectual conquest of the Indian mind by Western education. Everything that savoured of "past" of Bharat was tabooed. In this stage of the Indian mind, the so-called revivalist *literati* helped through their writings the love for the motherland. Of course, the spread of English education helped a good deal in this matter. It gave rise to the love of the country and the pride of race in the mind of the youth. Moreover, the phenomenal rise of Keshabchandra Sen and the respect he earned at home and abroad fostered the pride of race. Thus says B. C. Pal: "By his victories over the Christian missionaries in their controversies, Keshab's countrymen even outside his church and community, felt a genuine pride, which powerfully fed their

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46. B. C. Pal: Op. cit. P. 230.

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national conceit. Keshab's English visit and the way he was lionized by the British Public and the British Press, also reacted very powerfully upon the mind of his people in India. The old paralysing sense of superiority of their new political masters over them was visibly replaced by a new self-confidence in our educated countrymen."[47]

At that time, mid-Victorian English ideologies were the dominating factors in Indian thought. Manchester school of Politics was the political thought of the country. Yet, revivalism helped to create an awakening of the national mind. It tried to give a rational interpretation of Hindu religion and institutions. In this matter says Pal: "But the conflict of political interests between the new generation of English-educated Indians and the British officialdom of the country, and the more fundamental conflict between European modernism and Indian mediævalism soon provoked a new revolt against this foreign domination in the wake of which followed a new national self-consciousness which, in the first flush of its newly found pride of race and culture, commenced to repudiate whatever was foreign."[48]

On this field worked the Europe-returned youngmen and spoke of freedom. As already has been said that reaction against the influence of Keshabchandra Sen has already set in, and the minds of the youngmen turned to political thought. This is evinced by Pal who says again: "These doctrinal developments in the theology and church government of Keshabchandra Sen, naturally commenced to turn the bowels of the educated Bengaleee youths fed upon prevailing European rationalism and scepticism, against the Brahmo Samaj! This was the general intellectual and moral atmosphere and environments in the midst of which Surendranath opened his new political propaganda."[49]

In this time, Herbert Spencer with his theories of "Evolution" of society, and of "unknown and unknowable" in the matter of Godhood; J. S. Mill's idea "on Liberty"; Carlyle's "Heroes and Hero-worship"; Jevon's "Free Trade" theory, and the theory of

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47-49. B. C. Pal: Op. cit. Pp. 229; 424; 237.

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"gradualness" involved in these English thoughts were rampant in the Indian mind.

## MOSLEM AWAKENING

On the other side, Sir Syed Ahmed started his Aligarh College to educate the Moslem youths of North India. He and his associates like the poet Hali, were for going back to the past, to the days of pristine condition of Islam. On the other hand, Prof. Azad the author of "Abe Hayat", was completely for English learning and institutions. Thus, Moslem awakening began under the garb of mediæval revivalism. Of course, the spread of English education engendered scepticism and indifferentism in religious matters as is evinced in earlier Urdu poems written after the so-called Sepoy Mutiny.

Thus, the nineteenth century closes with incipient nationalism nurtured by the Indian National Congress, and impelled by race-pride looking backward in religious and social matters. Here it must be clearly remembered that Hindu orthodox revivalism, Islamic revivalism, and the Arya Samaj movement of the North, all looked backward. None of them caught the spirit of *Charaiveti* of the Aitereya Brahmana or like Videha Madhava of Satapatha Brahmana, went out exploring the unknown regions. No expansionism was involved in these movements. But during the closing period of the nineteenth century, bourgeoisie actuated by nationalism have ceased their conflicts in other planes and all have landed in political plane to fight the alien rule.

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## III

## FAMILY PEDIGREE

Narendranath Datta, later on known as the famous Swami Vivekananda was born on Monday January 12, 1863 A.D. (B.S. Paus Krishna-Saptami, Makar-Sankranti, Brahmo-Muhurta, *i.e*,. 6. 31. 33 A.M.) in the Simulia (colloquially Simla) Datta family of Calcutta.[1] The Dattas according to family tradition originally hailed from Datta-Dariatona (colloquially called Dereton), a village situated in the Kalna sub-division of the district of Burdwan. The western part of Bengal now forming the West Bengal State of federated Indian Union, got its name from the famous and the last Jaina *Tirthankara* Mahavira Vardhamana who was born in a Licchavi aristocratic family. While in sixth century B.C. the Buddha made Magadha the centre of his propaganda work, his rival Mahavira Vardhamana was preaching in West Bengal which was called in the Jaina Scriptures (Amgas) as *Rahr*. But we find that in the annals of the Ajivikas[2] the lower part of West Bengal was called *Punyabhumi,* corresponding to mediæval Dakshin-Rahr and the northern part as *Vajrabhumi,* corresponding to Uttar-Rahr. Later on, in the Puranas, the whole of West Bengal was called Suhma country. It is supposed to be named after a tribe called *Suhma* in the Puranas. It seems that in late Brahmanical period of Hindu rule, West Bengal was simultaneously called *Rahr* (Bhavadeva Bhatta's inscription) and Suhma (Dhoyi's *Pavanaduta*).
From the annals left by the Tirthankara, and the Therigatha of Chapa, a daughter of a hunter of Punyabhumi, we may surmise that in the sixth and fifth centuries B.C. West Bengal was not aryanized in religion. But in the Gupta Period we find that the whole of Bengal was aryanized in religion and culture. The

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1. The time of birth is taken from the original horoscope.
2. Vide B. M. Barua: History of the Ajivikas—Pt. I.

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governors and the officials have got Sanskrit names. The Damodarpur plates and the much latter Faridpur plates give the names of the officials with the suffixes: Nag, Datta, Palit, Kundu, Pal, etc. Perhaps these were parts of Sanskrit names which became hereditary later on in Bengal.

At the close of the Pala rule, we find the *Suras* ruling in the South Rahr. According to the Karika of Dhruvananda Misra, the Suras originally came from the Darada country. The Daradas are regarded as Vratya-Kshatriyas in Manu; but in Bengal they became the protectors of Brahmanism. The Bengal tradition says that the King Adisura of this dynasty, being unable to find Brahmans well-acquainted with Vedic rites in Bengal, which was then inundated with Tantricism—the aftermath of Mahayana Buddhism, as well as with Jainism and what not, sent for Vedicist Brahmans from the King of Kanyakubja who was Adisura's father-in-law. But who would go to Bengal where visit has been prohibited in pre-Mauryan Baudhayana-Smriti except in the case of pilgrimage!

Again, fantastic stories are narrated in the annals of the geneologists who say, that at last five Brahmans consented to visit the Court of Adisura to perform his *Jagna*. Five Kayasthas: Vasu, Mitra, Datta, Ghose, Guha came along with these Vedicist Brahmans. The strange part of the fantastic description is that while the five Kayasthas who are implied to be the protectors of these priests in their journey, are described as companions or even as servants of these holy Brahmans. But these priests came in bullock-carts while amongst the "servants", Datta came on elephant-back, Guha on horse-back, Ghose, Vasu and Mitra in palanquins. Perhaps these are very late concoctions during the Mohammedan supremacy when the priestly class, in the absence of the Hindu rulers became the sole arbitrators of the Hindu Society.

To resume the traditional story, five Brahmans and five Kayasthas came to Bengal and the Jagna was performed. At the end, the King honored the visitors with free gifts of villages and wealth. He called on each of the Kayasthas to give their family history. The family geneological books written in Sanskrit give a descrip-

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tion of these interlocutions which give grandiose pedigrees of these five Kayastha visitors.[3]

The *Karika* of the Uttar-Rahr Kayasthas written by Kulacharya Panchanan speaks of these five men to be the descendants of Sri Karna, a son of Chitragupta the eponymous ancestor of the Kayasthas. Then it says, that the visitors *Datta* and Das are of Solar dynasty (Suryavamsi) and Mitra is of Lunar (Chandravamsi) dynasty. Again the Ghatak-Karika of Dakshin-Rahr Kayasthas written by Dwija Ghatak Churamani says that, some of the descendants of these Kayasthas who settled in Uttar-Rahr, came to the southern portion of the country and settled there. They acknowledged to be the servants of the holy Brahmans. Hence, the Dakshin-Rahr Kayasthas in order to show their politeness to the priests, add the prefix 'Das' to their family titles to distinguish themselves from those of the other castes having similar surnames. Again, the same Karika says that Datta answered the King's query by saying: "I am no servant. I have come to see your country along with the Brahmans who are fellow-villagers".[4] Thereupon, the King castigated him as impolite (Vinayahina). On this account, he was deprived of the status of a *Kulin*. Since then, for last seven or eight hundred years the Dattas are regarded as proud and arrogant *vis-a-vis* the claim of Brahmanical superiority. It seems, the Datta-clan never acknowledged Brahmanical supremacy. The above dialogue implies that.

Coming down to the practical side of the story, there is no epigraphic or any historical record to substantiate the story of King Adisura's sacrifice. History does not record the name of King Adisura, though there are epigraphic and historical records to testify the existence of the ruling Sura Kings of the Rahr country. Perhaps the word Adisura, like "Adivaraha" means the original founder of the ruling family. But, there are enough epigraphic records from Pala rule onward to prove the migration of Brahmans from Kanyakubja and Madyadesha to Bengal, and these were

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3. Nagendranath Vasu: "Kayastha Ethnology"; "Rajanya Kanda" (in Bengalee).
4. *Ibid.*, Op. cit.

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donated with free gifts of villages for settlement. Indeed, the Bengalee language which is a dialect of Magadhi-Prakrit testifies that the aryanization of Bengal must have been made from Magadha, Mithila and the upper Gangetic Valley.

As regards the Kayasthas, the epigraphic records naturally are silent about them, as these are only the documents of gifts to the Brahmans. But the geneological texts give the names of the original places and some of their tribal affiliations viz., Binda, Srivastavya, Srikarna, Ambastha, Suryadhwaja, Chaidya, Agnikula, Saikasena (Bangaj-Kayastha-Karika of Dwija Vachaspati). Nagendranath Vasu *Prachya-Vidyarnava,* has fished out the tribal affiliation from the geneological texts of different septs of the Bengal Kayasthas: Srivastavya, Saksena, Karana, Suryadhwaja, Ambastha, Rajadhana, and Gauda.[5] Then the texts record further migrations from upper Gangetic Valley. Summing up all these records, Vasu has said: "According to the geneological texts, the Kayasthas who migrated to Bengal (89 families) from the upper Gangetic Valley, are the kinsmen of the upper Indian Kayastha tribes, and like them are included in the Kshatriya Varna".[6] But the modern historians opine, that there is no record of this migration from Kanyakubja at the Court of King Adisura of Bengal, and the geneological texts of the Brahmans and the Kayasthas are fabrications of very late date. On the other hand, the writing of "Vallala-Charita" which is supposed to have been completed four hundred years ago at the time of Sri Chaitanya, and the Karika of Dwija Vachaspati —which was written at the Court of Danujamardanadeva a century earlier than that, contain the stories of the migrations referred to above.

Of course there are contradictory statements in these texts regarding traditional names and narrations. Not much reliance can be made on these books. Yet, the historian Rakhaldas Banerjea has been constrained to acknowledge that there must be some basis

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5. N. N. Vasu: "Ethnology of the Kayasthas"; p. 183.
6. *Ibid*: Op. cit. p. 184. The Kayasthas are regarded as Kshatriyas in the Allahabad and Patna High Courts.

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behind this strong tradition.[7] On the other hand, the historian Jadunath Sarkar says that he has found out the tradition of the import of the Brahmans of Kanyakubja from five provinces. Likewise, the present-writer has discovered the tradition of the migration from four provinces viz., Assam, Bengal, Orissa, and Central Province. Among these, like Bengal, the Assam tradition speaks of the migration of the Brahmans and Kayasthas from Kanyakubja.[8] Pandit Haraprasad Sastri opined that after the conquest of Kanyakubja from the Buddhists, King Jasovarman sent Brahman missionaries to the Buddhist countries for religious propaganda. This may account for the story.

As regards the authority of the Scriptures in the matter of the Kayasthas, Yagnavalkya Samhita (300 A.D.—600 A.D.) was the first to mention the name of the official called "Kayastha" (1.333). He said that the King should protect the subjects from the rapacity of the Kayasthas. It is the first time that we find the name mentioned in Sanskrit literature. Now-a-days, some think that as Yagnavalkya Samhita was written after Scythian domination in the North and in the West, the word can be traced from the Persian *Kayathia* of the Behistun inscription of Darius I. Be that what it may, from Yagnavalkya onward all the Sanskrit texts refer to the Kayasthas as officials of the Government. They are regarded as the favorites of the Kings, and the Kings play in their hands and are influenced by them in various ways, etc. They have always formed the bureaucracy of the realm. Dr. Buehler said that the official Rajukas of the Maurya emperors were the progenitors of the mediæval Kayasthas.

It is doubted whether the term "Kayastha" connoted a caste in original days. Like other castes, it was an occupational name *i.e.,* official designation viz., Tankadas, the *Kayastha-Vriddha* of Emperor Dharmapala.[9] In the same way was Luipada who was the *Kayastha* of the King of Udayana, but he was a

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7. Vide R. D. Banerjea: "History of Bengal", Pt. I, (in Bengalee).
8. Vide B. N. Datta: "Anthropological notes on Assam castes and tribes" in "Anthropological papers", New series, No. 5, Calcutta University, '38. Journal of Letters.
9. B. N. Datta: "Mystic Tales of Lama Taranatha."

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Kshatriya prince by birth. Again, Soddala of Guzerat who lived in 11th century and a descendant of the Valabhi Kings, called himself a Kayastha as well as a Kshatriya.[10] It does not seem that the official group called Kayastha crystallized everywhere as a caste before thirteenth century A.D. The Anhalwad inscriptions of the Chalukyas in eleventh century,[11] speak of Thakur Sati Kumar Siha, the son of a Kayastha, etc. It seems that these men are marked by hereditary official posts. The "Brahma-Vaivarta Purana" and the "Vrihadharma Purana" do not speak of the Kayastha caste but speak of a Karana caste.[12] Now-a-days, the group known as Karana is the same as Srikarna of the geneological books. It is one of the Kayastha tribes.

On the other hand, in the twelfth century, we find the ministers of war and peace (*Sandhi-Vigrahika*) of the Sena rulers of Bengal, to have family surnames which are in vogue among the Kayasthas of Bengal. In the matter of Kayasthas as a minister, Nagendranath Vasu, drew the attention of the reader that according to Sukracharya and Medhatithi, a Sudra cannot get ministership. Hence, the ministers of war and peace of the Brahman Sena Kings named Ghose, Nag, Datta, Sinha could not have been Sudras. Again, Sukraniti says, "a Brahman should be appointed as the head of a village (Gramapi), a Kayastha as a writer, a Vaishya as the Customs Officer, a Sudra as the doorkeeper of the Court" (2, 420).

Numerous proofs from the Sanskrit texts can be quoted to prove that the writer classes called "Lekhaka" and 'Ganaka' crystallized into Kayasthas in modern India. It is they who formed the officialdom of the State. As such, like the scribes of ancient Egypt, Babylon and Sassanian Persia, they formed a part of the ruling class. Hence, they have been a part of the traditional Kshatriya Varna. The Nibandha "Viramitrodaya," which has been written in the sixteenth century and is the Smriti-legislation of Banaras, the holiest city of the Hindus, calls the Kayasthas as

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10. N. N. Vasu: "History of Kamarupa." Vol. II, p. 136.
11. "Eleven land-grants of the Chalukyas of Anhalwad," in "Indian Antiquary." Vol. VI, 1877.
12. Vide "History of Bengal." Vol. II, Dacca Publication.

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Kshatriyas. As such, they are recognized in the Courts of upper Gangetic Valley. All over India, the Kayasthas claim to be of Kshatriya Varna. This claim is explicitly acknowledged in some places, and denied in some other places; class-conflict is involved in this matter. It is clear from some of the mediæval texts that there have been a bitterness of the Brahmans against the Kayasthas. There is a bitterness between both the castes everywhere except in Bengal. It is manifest that a class-conflict between the two has been raging since the mediæval ages. On the other hand, it is to be noticed, that Chitragupta the eponymous ancestor of the Kayasthas is worshipped by the Brahmans and non-Brahmans on some occasions along with Lord Dharma with the following mantra: "Yamaya Chitraya Chitraguptaya bai namah" (Harita quoted in "Haribhaktivilasa," 58). Some of the Puranas sanction the worship of Chitragupta. Even Raghunandana (Titti-tattva) and Kamalakara (Nirnaya-sindhu) speak of worship of Chitragupta on the occasion of *bhratri-dvitiya* ceremony. The reason of the bitterness is not far to seek. In the ancient Sanskrit Literature, we find the Brahmans to have been the ministers and writing in Sanskrit. But since the seventh century, we find officials calling themselves "Kayasthas" who bring the Kings under their influence (Vide "Mitakshara" and "Rajatarangini"), write *Prasastis* of their masters in Sanskrit and occupy highest ministerial posts down to the village accountantship. Again, in Behar some of the Kayasthas have the same family titles as the Brahmans viz., Pande, Missir, Tewari, (Trivedi).[13] In Guzerat side some of them act as priests.[14] Further, in Guzerat and Cutch they act as priest, writer and soldier.[15] In Aditya Purana this class of Kayasthas are classed with other Brahmans. Even a branch of them is known as "Igotpuri Brahman."[16] Thus, it is no wonder that the Brah-

13. N. N. Vasu: "Ethnology of the Kayasthas." Pp. 150-151.
14. Sherring: "Tribes and castes." Vol. II.
15. "Indian Antiquary." Vol. V, p. 171.
16. N. N. Vasu. Op. cit. p. 131.

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mans will be spiteful to the Kayasthas and preserve their class-interest by arrogantly denouncing the latter.

Again, in the Mohammedan Period, most of the landlords of Bengal before the Mughal Conquest were the Kayasthas (vide: Ain-i-Akbari). Further, it is they who did the fighting against the foreigners in Bengal. Here, we must remember that the Hindu General who was pushing back the English troops from the field of Plassey, and but for the treachery of Mirzaffar would have changed the course of history, was Mohanlal Kayastha.

It is manifest that dialectical contradictions of Historical-Materialism of mediæval India evoked a rival functional class in the state service, thus depriving a section of the Brahmans of their bread. They were confined to their religious duties. Again, as Buddhists—the Kayasthas became religious heads of monasteries, wrote religious texts, etc. Further as Brahmanists, —they wrote religious texts in Sanskrit ("Sadukti Karnamitra" of Sridhardas) and in Bengalee languages. They were both fighters and writers. Hence they became eyesores to many of the Brahmanical Smriti and Nibandha-writers. Even, where the Brahmans acquired temporal power as under the Mahratha Peshwas, they persecuted the Kayasthas.[17] It is no wonder that when Swami Vivekananda, a non-Brahman, became celebrated as a religious teacher, the Brahmans of Madras and Bengal provinces abused him as a "Sudra" because he seemed to be encroaching on their privileges. This was the phenomenon in their sub-conscious mind which gave vent to the plea of orthodoxy.

A new discussion lately sprang up in Bengal regarding the origin of its Kayasthas. Some time ago, Dr. D. N. Bhandarkar,[18] wrote an article that the Brahman donees mentioned in the Nidhanpur plates of King Vaskaravarman of Kamarupa (seventh century A.D.) contain surnames of Brahmans with their Gotras, Pravaras which are to be found among the Bengal Kayasthas of today! Indeed, such names as Datta Swami, Vasu Swami, Das

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17. "History of the Pattana Prabhus" By Shamrao Moroji. Pp. 95-99, "Bombay Courier," 22nd Aug. 1795.

18. Dr. D. N. Bhandarkar: "Indian Antiquary," March 1932. Pp. 45-52.

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Swami, Mitra Swami, etc. occur also in the plate grant of Raja Lokenath of Tippera given in 650 A.D.[19] Again, the Neulpara plate grant of King Subhakara of Kalinga contains similar names.[20]

Dr. Bhandarkar opined that these Brahmans were Nagar-Brahmans who migrated from Lata country (Guzerat) to Bengal, (an illustration of it is to be found in Dharmapala's plate grant), and in course of time were transformed into Kayasthas! Again, the Government anthropologist finds the "Co-efficient of Racial likeness" of the Bengal Kayasthas to be the same with the Nagar-Brahmans and Benias of Guzerat.[21] But this seeming likeness is not of much consequence as Prof. Fisher says that, "it is a test of significance, it does not calculate racial difference."[22]

As regards the theory of Nagar-Brahman origin of the Kayasthas, N. N. Vasu has said that only five names are common between both the groups. On the other hand, Dr. Bhandarkar says that these surnames were similar with the Kshatriya names of North India before the Mohammedan Conquest.[23] Further he says, among the Kayastha surnames at least twenty-four were in vogue among the Bengal Brahmans of seventh and eighth centuries; of these at least ten were prevalent among the Kshatriyas of second century B.C. This fact proves, he says, that the Brahmans and the Kshatriyas came from the same stock. Again, this proves, says Vasu, that the Kayasthas originally belonged to the ancient Kshatriya Varna. Further he says, these surnames are extant among the Gaud-Brahmans, Udichya-Brahmans, and Gaud-Rajputs![24]

But these discussions do not lead us anywhere. We know that Hinduism is dynamic and the castes are constantly changing their designations and status. Again, from the ancient records

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19. Tippera Grant of Lokenath: EP. Ind., Vol. XV, pp. 323-326.
20. Neulpara Grant of Subhakara: EP. Ind., Vol. XIV, p. 101.
21. Vide census 1930. Ethnological Report.
22. J. R. Anth. Inst. Vol. LXVI, Jan.-June, 1936.
23. Bhandarkar: Op. cit. p. 63.
24. N. N. Vasu: Op. cit. pp. 15-17.

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we find that the component members of a Varna have changed their Varna-affiliations. The last test of racial affiliation or dissimilarity lies in the enquiry of Physical Anthropology. The somatological comparison gives us some clue in the matter. Now let us refer to the anthropological reports. The anthropological investigator of 1931 census, speaks of the Bengal Kayasthas having broad-skulls and high-pitched noses. Then he says that the Bengal Brahmans and Kayasthas are intimately related. As regards their Co-efficient of racial likeness, he equates the Kayasthas with the Nagar-Brahmans and Nagar-Benias of Guzerat. But as the indices of measurements so far are not yet published, we are not in the know regarding the nature of the component elements that form the average. Hence, we will have to go back to Sir Herbert Risley, who made comprehensive anthropological enquiries regarding the Indian tribes and castes.[25] Sir Herbert Risley has formulated a study-room race named by him "Indo-Aryan." From this hypothesis, he proceeded to prove that there is a racial basis of the caste-system of India. Then, in order to find the trace of his fictitious race the Indo-Aryan, he formulated the following dictum: "Higher is the nasal index lower is the status of the caste." Conversely, "Higher is the social status of the caste lower is the nasal index of that social group." The lower nasal index according to him evinces the amount of the mystic Indo-Aryan blood that the subject possesses in his veins. As according to Risley, the Indo-Aryan is a biotype with dolicocephal-leptorrhinian (long-skull narrow-nose) characteristics.

Taking Risley's indices we find that the Brahmans and the Kayasthas of Uttar Pradesh (formerly United Provinces) contain the following nasal indices:

| | |
|---|---|
| Brahman . . . . | 74.6 |
| Kayastha . . . . | 74.8 |
| Chatri . . . . . | 77.8 |

In Bengal we find the following serial number:

| | |
|---|---|
| Kayastha . . . . | 70.3 |
| Brahman . . . . | 70.4 |

25. Vide H. Risley: "People of India"; "Tribes and Castes of Bengal."



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Thus the Kayasthas have comparatively narrower nasal indices in Bengal than the Brahmans! Then, breaking the component elements, we find that while Brahmans have 42.0% of leptorrhiny in them, the Kayasthas have got 45.0% in them. As regards chamoerrhiny, *i.e.*, very broad nose which is regarded as an aboriginal strain, the Brahmans of Bengal have got 3% of it while the Kayasthas have got 1% only.[26] Thus we see that the Kayasthas of North India are on par with the Brahmans in the matter of somatological test. And in Bengal the Kayasthas stand the test of Risley better than the Brahmans.

Thus, we see in our analysis, that the anthropological tests are no criteria of actual facts of society. Indian caste system is not based on race system. Caste system has got its class-character. The status of a class is the result of the class-conflict that it has gone through. The Kayasthas as a social group have been recruited from the bureaucracy of the governments that have constantly risen and fallen in India in the past. They form a part of the Bourgeoisie of the Indian society. Not being cultivators, they had not the collective physical strength to curve out kingdoms with their swords like the Rajputs who were newcomers in the field. Hence, they did not acquire full recognition from the priesthood and the society in general. Here, we beg to draw the attention of the reader, that since mediæval period, the Rajputs are not the only claimants to Kshatriyahood. Beside the Rajputs, the Kayasthas, the Marattas, the Jats, the Rajus and the Vellalas of the South also claim to be of Kshatriya Varna. All these rigmaroles about the status of the Kayasthas are mentioned here, because the brunt of prejudice of the Brahman Caste fell on Swami Vivekananda that he was a "Sudra," hence could not be a monk and a religious preacher.

Four hundred years ago, similar prejudiced attacks were made on another "Datta" of the Kayastha Caste. Narottam Datta, called "Thakur Mahasaya," the only son of Raja of Kheturi,

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26. Regarding a biometric analysis of the castes of North India see B. N. Datta in "Anthropos" Band 22, '27 and in "Studies in Indian Social-polity." Ch. IV.

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who was also the Prime Minister of the Sultan of Gaud, became a Vairagi-monk of the order of Sri Chaitanya. As such, he had Brahman disciples and in Bengal Vaishnava fashion, used to bless his Brahman disciples by putting the big toe of his right foot on their heads. This was too much that the orthodox priesthood could stand. They made vituperative attacks on him as it was a sacrilege, but were defeated by Narottam's Brahman disciples. But the vim of curse followed him even after his death![27] In its last analysis, these prejudices in the name of orthodoxy are nothing but expressions of class-antagonism. The Kayasthas as Buddhist sages and monks have made their marks in Indo-Aryan culture. The phenomena did not affect the priestly orthodoxy. But when within the frame-work of Sanatana society, some Kayasthas arise as religious leaders, then comes the challenge to Brahmanical monopoly, hence class-conflict takes the expression of "Brahmanism or Sanatana Dharma in danger," "sacrilege on Sanatana Dharma"!

Now to resume the family history of Swami Vivekananda, we find that Dereton, called in Land Settlement account *"Datta-Dariatona,"* is an old village. On inspection of the place by the writer himself, he culled out the following facts: The present-day Zamindar of the place said that they know nothing about the Dattas. All they know is, that they have bought three villages which originally belonged to the Dattas. On the entrance to the village is a meadow with a depressed surface, which is called "Naupukur" (nine ponds), a tank dedicated in the name of nine sons of the original founder of the family. The pond is so old that it has been filled up to form a meadow which holds water of very shallow depth only during the rainy season. On the north side of the site of the original dwelling house which has fallen down, there is a medium-sized *Tal-pukur* still called as "Datta Talpukur" (pond studded with palm trees all around, a speciality of West Bengal); the brick-built staircase of the pond is completely worn out and the impression of the bricks are only visible. On the south side of the house there is a long *bil* (long-sized pond to preserve fishes). At the back of the house, there is a

27. Vide "Bhakti-Ratnakar" (in Bengalee).

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plot of land beyond which meanders the slender Behula river. Again, at the front of the main entrance, there is a plot of ground leading to the sreet of the village. Thus, it has been the site of the original village Squire.

Further, the late *litterateur* Purnachandra Dey Udvatsagar, who took special interest in old family geneologies and who was a son-in-law of the local land-lord family, informed the present-writer, that there is a big pond in the village which was donated by the Subedar of Bengal, Nawab Mursidkuli Khan to a milk-man (Goala). In the title-deed of the gift, the Dattas are mentioned as residing in the village. Thus, we can safely trace the Dattas of Dariatona from late Mughal Period. Again, the late Nagendranath Vasu Prachyavidyarnava, in his voluminous Bengalee book called—National History of Bengal,—("Dakshin-Rahriya Kayastha Kanda." Pt. I, p. 92) has quoted from a manuscript-text called "Kula-Pradip" that there have been thirty societies (Samaj) of the Dakshin-Rahr Kayastha Dattas. Dariatona is one of them. Then he says that by perusing Dakshin-Rahri and Bangaj geneological texts it seems that in the time of Vallal Sena these societies were famous (P. 93). But how much of these geneological texts are trustworthy must be probed by the historians. Here, we beg to say that the name of the village sounds Persian-like, hence it must have been founded during the Mohammedan Period.

The village is an old one. Most of the houses are brick-built. This signifies that once it had been a prosperous locality; but today like other villages of West Bengal, it is a malaria-infested place being filled up with jungles. Many of the relatives of the Dattas have died out. A gentleman is living in the house rebuilt on the old site, and who has inherited the site, the ponds and a few bighas of land as what remains of the property of the Dattas of Dariatona. He inherited this property by being the grandson by the daughter's side from the last of the Dattas of the locality. This gentleman informed the present-writer that the Dattas of Dariatona had been of "Kasyapa" gotra and that there had been a tradition in the local Datta family that one of them settled in Calcutta. Further, he informed the writer that he did

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not see many male members in the Datta family while they existed.

From all the accounts culled out from the village, this much can be gathered that the Dattas had been a local land-lord family with a social centre (Samaj) of their own. And they were to be traced as the "Dattas of Dariatona" from the Mughal Period. But according to the inexorable law of population-politics that works equally everywhere, the old families have died out or are dying out. The Dattas of Dariatona and their branches are not immune from this law. Further informations that can be gathered by the present-writer is, that some of the Kayastha families of Dakshin-Rahr sept residing in the districts of Midnapur, Burdwan and Nadia claim to be the descendants of the Dattas of Dariatona through female side. Here is to be said that the writer's elder brother Sri Mahendranath Datta says, that our father used to make his sons repeat the adage "Datta of which place?" "of Amlahada." But the writer was informed long ago, that the Amlahada Dattas are of Gargya Gotra. In the "Kula-Pradipa" text as quoted by N. N. Vasu, the Dattas of Amlahada and Dariatona are marked as of different *Samaj*. But there is so much confusion in the geneological texts, that not much sociological facts can be salvaged out of them.

All we know that we are the Dattas of Kasyapa Gotra and of Dakshin-Rahr sept. The *Datta-Kula* has made its mark on the history of Bengal. We hear of one Vyas Datta, a minister of Vallala Sena.[28] Again, the minister of war and peace of Laksman Sena whose war-cloud rolled from the banks of Godavari to Prayag, was Narayana Datta. Raja Ganesha who set aside the Moslem rule and established himself as an independent Hindu monarch of Bengal, was according to the latest researches of Pandit Haraprasad Sastri and N. N. Vasu, a Datta of Kasyapa Gotra and belonging to the Uttar-Rahr sept. We have already spoken of Narottam Datta of Kheturi whose sacrifice and piety startled everybody and who became one of the pillars of Vaishnavism of Bengal. In modern time, the great Bengalee poet

28. Bengal geneology says that Vyas Datta was cut into two for not accepting the Kulinism established by the King.

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Michael Madhusudan Datta who was called the "Milton of Bengal", was a Dakshin-Rahr Kayastha of Kasyapa Gotra. Then the great scientific writer and rationalist leader, Akshayakumar Datta, was of Bangaj sept. His grandson, the late Satyendranath Datta was a rising poet in Bengal. Then comes late Srimati Taru Datta, who has been counted as one of the poets in English of the Victorian Age by the historians of English Literature. Along with her, Srimati Aru Datta, her sister and a poetess is also to be mentioned here. Then comes their relative, the great Romeshchandra Datta of the latter part of the nineteenth century, belonging to the Dakshin-Rahr sept. Then comes Dr. Ramchandra Datta, the greatest chemist of his day and a great *litterateur*. Again comes Umeshchandra Datta, a leader of the Brahmo Samaj and an educationalist. Then we mention Hirendranath Datta the great scholar and a leader of Theosophy. Then comes Amritalal Datta (Habu Babu) the best flute player and musician of his time.[29] Also his brother Surendranath Datta (Tamu Babu) a noted musical player of all instruments. Lastly comes Narendranath Datta. Besides these and others not mentioned here, there are some influential zamindar families belonging to this clan. Thus the Datta clan is serving the motherland all through its history. Here also must be mentioned a forgotten name, Rabindranath Datta, who had been a rising young poet in English. But he died too early when prosecuting his post-graduate studies in England. Again, we have Sri Pramathanath Datta of Sukea Street, Calcutta, who on behalf of the Bengal Revolutionary Party was the first Indian to enter the army of a first class European power. Pramathanath joined the *Legion d'Etranger* of France in 1910, and served his term in Sierra Leone and in Saigon. Later on, he went to Turkey and Iran to take part in Indian revolutionary work. In the latter place he was wounded by British shots. In 1921 he was brought from Iran to Moscow. Since then, he is a teacher in Oriental Seminary of Leningrad University.

It seems that there has been an old feud between the Datta clan and the priestly-class. Otherwise, how can one account for the

29. The great Ostad Allauddin Khan acknowledges him to be his master.

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caricature of *Bharu Datta* in the "Chandi" poems written by Madhavacharya and Mukundaram Kavi-Kankan in different periods of Bengal history. Why of all the Kayasthas, a "Datta" was selected to be the devil of the piece!

Now to return to our direct line. Ramnidhi Datta with his son Ramjiban Datta and grandson Ramsundar Datta moved from Dariatona to Calcutta and settled in Garh-Govindapur. Here, it is to be remembered that Calcutta (Kalikata) had been an old village mentioned in Mukundaram Kavikankan's poetical book "Chandi", written in the sixteenth century when Man Singh was the Mughal Subedar of Bengal. In 1698 A.D. Job Chernock, the head of the English East India Company, leased three villages viz., Kalikata, Sutanuti and Govindapur from the Mughal Government. Ramnidhi and Ramjiban held good posts, Ramsundar was the Dewan of a Zamindar. But when the English East India Company acquired the village of Govindapur and built Fort William, the inhabitants of the locality moved towards the north, what is now-a-days called the municipal area of North Calcutta. Likewise, Ramnidhi and Ramjiban came to Simulia in North Calcutta and built a new building in the place now-a-days called Madhu Roy Lane. It is said that some of his kinsmen built themselves houses in the same place. But later on, they moved elsewhere.

Ramsundar had five sons. His eldest son was Rammohan Datta who according to the tradition of the family was an attorney of the Supreme Court. But it seems, that in those days only an Englishman could be an attorney of the Supreme Court. He might have been what was called in those days a "Farsi lawyer" i.e., a lawyer versed in Persian according to the old style, but in reality he was the managing clerk of the office of an English attorney. He built himself a house in the neighboring place at 3, Gour Mohan Mukherjee Street. It was a big building built according to the old grandiose style. The capacious entrace door built of Nepal Sal tree leads to the big courtyard, on the east side of which was situated the two-rowed five-vaulted *Puja-dalan* (place of seasonal worship), and on the west side was the cow stable. Inside the house in the female apartment, was a big tank for the use of the female members of the family. Outside the

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building in premises No. 2, Gour Mohan Mukherjee Street, is a plot containing more than four cottahs of land, where was the stable of Rammohan Datta.

Then he appointed a *Pujari* (priest) for daily worship of his family deities, a *Purohita* (family-priest) to perform the marriage and other ceremonies (our priest had only two Jajamana families to minister; besides the Dattas, he used to minister to the Shovabazar Raj family), a Guru whose descendant became the famous Bhudevchandra Mukhopadhyaya, and an Acharya to accompany the party when invitation was issued or a ceremonial procession would go out (our Acharya family becoming rich changed its caste designation and became a Srotriya Brahman).

Thus, Rammohan Datta passed his days in grand old-styled aristocratic life. He amassed wealth and property. He had two gardens in Salkia, a plot of land in Kidderpur which later on was taken by the Government to form a dock. The "Kayastha Kaustuva" published in the early part of the nineteenth century from the Andul (Howrah district) Raj family, while giving a list of those Kayasthas who have become prosperous and famous during the British rule so far extant, has mentioned the name of Rammohan Datta of Simulia. After building the house, he invited his four other brothers to live with him, but the second brother refused to stay under elder brother's roof; hence he separated himself and lived elsewhere. At last, the old ancestral house was sold out by the co-parceners after the marriage of the writer's father Bisvanath Datta.

It used to be said by the old female members of the family that Rammohan was a handsome man with very fair complexion. These traits were inherited by his eldest son Durgaprasad.[30] Rammohan had two sons and seven daughters. One of his daughters' descendants live in Barisa-Behala, now a suburb of Calcutta. Another daughter was married to Laksminarain Vasu of Simulia whose descendants are living there. One of Ram-

30. We have given the name as it is found in the plaint of the partition suit of 1883-84.

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mohan's brothers Kristo Datta had three sons, amongst whom Gopalchandra Datta became a famous learned public man.[31] He was a highly placed Government servant in the Postal Department. After retirement, he became the sub-editor of the "Hindu Patriot" while Kristodas Pal was the editor. He wrote a book in Bengalee: "Sulochana", a novel.

The two sons of Rammohan were named Durgaprasad and Kaliprasad. Durgaprasad was versed in Persian and Sanskrit learnings. He married Shyamasundari, the youngest daughter of Dewan Rajiblochan Ghose of North Calcutta. Rajiblochan had only two daughters, the eldest being married in Baghbazar. Rajiblochan was the Dewan of the India Government's *Toshakhana* (a department to deal with the Indian princes in social matters). His name is being still remembered by the elderly generation of Calcutta.

The writer heard from his mother that her father was also related to Dewan Rajiblochan, who stood in grand-father relationship with the writer's mother as well. Again, street ballads used to be sung in the name of Rajiblochan on account of his riches. Shyamasundari was learned in Bengalee language. She had a very good handwriting and wrote a big poetical work in Bengalee called *"Gangabhakti Tarangini"*. The manuscript intended to be published was kept in our sleeping room. But in the duration of the period of the family's temporary migration to Raipur and return[32], the manuscript got lost!

Shyamasundari was a beautiful lady. Shivchandra, alias Nepalchandra Datta, Gopalchandra's younger brother, thus described her to the writer in his younger days: "What a beautiful woman your grand-mother was! She was truly Shyama in name and in features; what a forehead, what eyebrows, what eyes, what nose, what hair, she had! I never saw such a beautiful woman in a Bengalee home any further." She had two children: the first one was a daughter who died while seven years old. The son was named Bisvanath who was born Circa, 1835 A.D. Bisvanath's father turned a Sadhu while he was young. Shyama-

31. Vide Speeches of Kailaschandra Basu and Gopalchandra Dutt.
32. The family stayed there for a year and a half.

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sundari died of Cholera; naturally the nursing of the boy devolved on the uncle Kaliprasad Datta and his wife.

When Rammohan Datta died of Cholera at the age of thirty-six leaving the building of the residential house incomplete, he called his younger brothers to testify that they have got no share in the house, but none of them turned up. He had a widowed daughter in the house and left two orphaned boys behind. Naturally a son-in-law of Rammohan became the guardian of the widowed mother-in-law and brothers-in-law. But he squandered half a lakh of rupees of his mother-in-law. This was the state of the family before Durgaprasad came to age. Some say that he like his father was connected in an attorneys' firm. But an accident occured in the house which turned the course of his life. It seems that the widowed sister who was rich by her husband's right was the boss of the family. For some reason or other, she was cross with the writer's grand-mother.

Once the writer's grand-mother came back from her father's house, which she visited temporarily. Seeing a palanquin entering the courtyard, the sister enquired, who was in it. In answer she was told that her eldest sister-in-law was in the palanquin. Hearing it, she sternly ordered the palanquin to go back. Thereupon, the writer's grand-mother had to return to her father's house. At that time, Durgaprasad was pacing the veranda around the courtyard. Finding that his wife was insulted, he followed his wife and left the family-dwelling for good. Later on he turned a Sadhu.

Here we must narrate something about the aunt of Bisvanath. One of Rammohan's daughters was married to a young rich man living in the village. One day, while he was going to take a bath in the pond, he met an astrologer. The latter, seeing him foretold, that it is written on his forehead that he will die this day by snake-biting. Thus the story was told to us in our childhood. Thereupon, the son-in-law of Rammohan hurriedly bought a clay-pot (handi) from a potter's shop and wrote a will in favor of his girl-wife. Then the prophecy was fulfilled. Hearing the sad demise of his son-in-law, Rammohan took the widowed daughter and the clay-pot as the last will and testament and returned to Calcutta. Along with it the family-deity

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*Salagram-Sila.* We do not know the legal situation exactly today in connection with the deity. Anyway, according to the Bengal School of Hindu Law, the wife had only a life-interest on the property which was worth a lakh. But she had to maintain the worship of her husband's family Salagram-Sila. It seems that her husband gave her an absolute right to his property. Yet, very soon, the Chowdhuries belonging to the Zamindar family of Baruipur, filed a suit in the Law Court, claiming themselves to be the sons of deceased man's sister and as such, to be the rightful possessor of the Salagram-Sila and the property. Thus a litigation ensued which lasted for three generations. The suit was concluded by the writer's father Bisvanath Datta when he became an attorney. The suit was decreed in favor of the Dattas who were in possession of the deity. But the property during the process of the suit dwindled down from one lakh to sixteen thousand rupees! The writer's grand-uncle took charge of the money. It is probable that the aunt who chased out the writer's grand-mother from the house, was the same widow and bossed over the family on this account!

Durgaprasad turned a monk after he left the house. But sometimes he used to come down to Calcutta from Upper India riding on a pony. He used to stay in the house of his Brahman Viksha-putra (when a Brahman boy during his *upanayana* i.e., wearing of the sacred thread takes Viksha or alms either from a lady or a male person, he becomes the Viksha-son of the alms-giver. This entails some expense on the part of the Viksha-father or mother). Durgaprasad gifted a house in Simla Street to his viksha-son. During his sojourn to Calcutta to join the Ganga-sagar Mela he used to stay there. It is said that Kaliprasad once took his monk-brother back home and locked him up. For three days the monk Durgaprasad foamed and fumed by crying hoarse to unlock the door. At last, froth came out of his mouth and at the advice of the elders, he was set free and he went away never to return home again. Here, it must be said that when Durgaprasad turned a monk, Kaliprasad had finished his Sadhu's life after six months and after return was extremely sorry to hear that his elder brother has turned a recluse. It was then the elder brother's turn. Naturally, the younger brother

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thought that Durgaprasad's mind would be changed if brought back home. But the device failed. Durgaprasad as a monk would not come back home.

Again, there was a tradition in our family, that it was written in Durgaprasad's horoscope that he would return home when he was thirty-six years of age. When he used to come to Calcutta, his son Bisvanath used to visit his father at the above-mentioned place. But he never came home or met his wife. But strangely, when he was of aforementioned age, he, while staying at his viksha-son's house, sent home his begging-bowl and rosary through an inmate of the family. In the meantime, the sympathetic neighbors advised Shyamasundari to go and do the *padaseva* (rubbing of the feet) while he takes his mid-day nap. Thereupon, the wife went to the room and pulling off the mosquito-curtain was trying to do as advised. Perceiving the intruder was no one else than his wife, he exclaimed, "Chandali has touched me," and ran out of the house! That was the last that he was seen.

Then an incident happened later on. Many years later, some female members of our family went on pilgrimage to Banaras. It was drizzling, and one of the females slipped down on the street. A band of sadhus was coming from behind. Seeing a woman fallen down, a sadhu exclaimed, "Mai gir gayee" (mother, you have fallen down) and pulled her up by her hairs. In the meantime, a lady of the company hearing the voice of the sadhu recognized it, and exclaimed, "Who is it, Durgaprasad!" It was Durgaprasad's eldest sister. Thereupon, seeing the familiar face, the sadhu uttered abusive language: "Guar beti, Guar beti", and ran away.

It must be said here, that the version as given in the life of Swami Vivekananda, published by Mayavati Ashrama, does not completely agree with the version known to the writer. The writer heard this story repeatedly from his mother, she said that the woman who was raised on her feet was the girl-widow of Durgaprasad's cousin Kalicharan. The writer's elder brother Sri Mahendranath says the same thing. According to the writer's mother, the last Shyamasundari met her husband was at the viksha-son's place. But one of Bhubaneswari's grand-

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children testifies that she heard from her, in her later age, that it was her mother-in-law who fell down and was picked up by Durgaprasad. But we never heard that the boy Bisvanath was with his mother and aunt at Banaras.

Another story the writer heard from his mother. Once Shyamasundari taking her boy-son was going to Banaras. Somewhere during the journey, the cry was raised by the boatmen or somebody else that the boat was sinking. Hearing the outcry, Shyamasundari taking hold of her boy jumped into the river. But she could not swim, she was sinking. Seeing the danger, Umapada Gupta, who was a Kaviraj by profession and once lived in our house with his nephew the latter-day celebrated Kaviraj Gopinath Sen, jumped down the stream and having got hold of her long hair raised her upon the boat. But the writer never heard from his mother the reason of Shyamasundari's sailing for Banaras and what happened afterwards. Generally, the writer used to hear scrappy news from the mother who herself perhaps did not know the details of the incidents. The fact of this rescue is still remembered by the family of Gopinath Sen, the nephew of the rescuer. Finally, to drop the curtain on Durgaprasad, the last news that was received of him was, that he has become a "mathadhari" i.e., the founder of a *matha* or an abbot of a monastery at Banaras. When his son Bisvanath became an earning man, he enquired through some persons the whereabout of his father in Banaras. But nothing came out of it. That was the last that we know of him.

After Durgaprasad's turning a monk, Kaliprasad became the head of the house. He married in the Mitra family of Joynagar, 24-Parganas. The Datta family was big with lots of dependants and relatives to maintain. One of Rammohan's daughters and her descendants lived with our family for four generations. It seems that like the old families of Calcutta, Kaliprasad made no earning, but lived on the family property which began to dwindle down gradually. At the time of marriage of the writer's father, the family was living on the rents accruing from the family properties. But these began to evaporate through expenditure.

It is a sad lot of many of the old families of Calcutta that the

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founder amasses wealth, the next generation lives on it, keeps on the old style and squanders money, and the third generation becomes pauper. From the second generation the idea gets into their head that it is unbecoming and beneath their dignity to work for a livelihood. They must live as gentlemen-at-large. This feudal notion has resulted in the ruination of good many old families of high status. Only those who have added to their ancestral wealth by business or by earning otherwise, have been able to keep their heads above water. The old European adage, that a family lasts only for three generations, is good for Calcutta as well. This is terribly true in the case of the writer's family and the family of his father's maternal grand-father.

Durgaprasad turned a recluse to avoid the worries of material life by saving his soul for life hereafter; but he left his wife and son in the mouths of the wolves. And these wolves and their cubs did not leave his descendants in peace till 1903! It is an unbalanced judgment of Hinduism that a man is applauded if he leaves his family and puts on a monk's robe. It is regarded that the man has made a great renunciation and acquired merit (Punya) by leaving his wife, children and property if he has any.[32] Of course, Durgaprasad had everything that a man could desire in this world. He forsook them all. That was a great renunciation.

But the other side of the question is never considered. People are blind to the fact of Economic interpretation of history which, as has been said before, agrees with Ideological interpretation of history. If saving of one's soul is the motive force, then does not interest lie behind it? Is it not a pure act of selfishness that actuates a person to leave his family for future salvation in the next world? If by leaving the family destitute and living a vagrant life by begging i.e., on the society, is a high act of merit, then India has not benefitted by it. There is a lack of sense of social duty and justice in a Hindu in this matter. The ancient Brahman sages were against this action. Max Mueller admits

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32. Vide some stories in "Bhaktamal."

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that the Brahmans were against the Buddha's innovation of initiating a young boy to monkhood, viz., Rahula, his young son of six years of age. The Brahmans have advanced the ideal of *Chaturasrama*, i.e., four-fold stages of human life. It was for this reason that the "Asramabasika" chapter of the Mahabharata was written and propagated. The ancient venerable *rishis* were married persons. Our orthodox Brahmanical leaders have completely failed to realize that present-day Hinduism is Buddhism in another form. The present-day Brahmanists have forgotten that the Brahmans once denounced Sankaracharya as a "Buddhist in disguise"! If Beatitude consists of turning a monk, then damnation awaits him hereafter for his selfish and irresponsible act towards society. It seems the low notion of the Indo-Aryans regarding woman accounts for this one-sided judgment. Individualism of Brahmanism engenders selfishness. It does not teach co-operative method of helping each other.

Durgaprasad's wife and son were left at the mercy of his brother. Indeed, his share of the family property and wealth devolved on his son. But the son Bisvanath was neglected and uncared for. He was an orphan and treated as such. There was a story current in our family that while Bisvanath was six years of age, he attended the Durgapuja ceremony of his rich maternal-grandfather's house. While playing on the courtyard of the house with the step-son of his maternal aunt, a rich invitee came in answer to the invitation sent out. The visitor, seeing two boys playing on the courtyard, asked Bisvanath's maternal-uncle that which of these two boys was his nephew? Thereupon, the uncle pointed out his sister's step-son who was clothed in costly dress and wearing jewels studded with precious stones! Seeing it, Bisvanath took it as an insult to him and left the place weeping. When his mother enquired of the whereabout of her son who could not be found in the maternal-uncle's house, it was found out that the boy had left that place situated in Baghbazar and had returned to his ancestral home in Simulia. It was said that Bisvanath never visited his maternal-uncle's house again. It is the same Datta spirit that the geneologists record to have been shown by the first Datta at the Court of Adisura. It is said that when somebody asked Swami Vivekananda as to what led

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him to rebut sharply the charges of the priesthood against him, he answered, "I could not forget that I was a Datta!" Years later, when Bisvanath was in affluent state of life, the same aunt's step-son used to come for monetary help. Referring to the adverse condition of his step-cousin, Bisvanath used to narrate to his children the old incident of his life. He used to say: "I was dark-skinned and shabbily dressed, I eat one plate of rice; he was covered with jewels of precious stones, naturally my maternal-uncle felt shy to point me out as his nephew!"

Another story of Bisvanath's early life as narrated by Nepalchandra Datta, to the writer is put down here. While Bisvanath was young, Kaliprasad, the uncle, borrowed the ornaments of his mother worth several thousands of rupees to conduct a law suit. Kaliprasad pawned the jewels for cash. Later on, Shyamasundari demanded the return of her jewels. At last, Kaliprasad transferred some zamindaries in the name of Bisvanath. Fourteen years old Bisvanath had to go with *lathials* (men fighting with sticks) to fight for taking possession of the taluqs. But these taluqs were found to have defective title-deeds! This is another instance of how Durgaprasad's brother treated his wife and son.

At the age of sixteen Bisvanath was married to the daughter of Nandalal Basu, the nephew of Ramtanu Basu of Simulia. Bhubaneshwari Devi was the only child of her parents. Naturally, the share of the ancestral house of the Basus and four cottahs of land was inherited by her, and the property is still being enjoyed by her sons according to the law of Dayabhaga. Here an interesting yet amusing story of Hindu mentality of the time is narrated. Our mother told us, that before her marriage some Tantrika alchemist made friends with her uncle-in-law Kaliprasad and assured him, that by his tantric powers he would convert coal into diamond if the latter stands the expense. Relying on the promise of the alchemist, Kaliprasad spent eighteen thousand rupees on this attempt of working miracle, which of course turned out nothing but a swindle! Our mother said that, when she entered the Datta family as a daughter-in-law, she saw the capacious Puja-dalan filled with saltpetre up to the ceiling as the remnant of this tantrika attempt.

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শ্রীমতী ভুবনেশ্বরী দেবী

BHUBANESHWARI DEVI

The mother of Swami Vivekananda

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In this way, the credulous Hindus in the past used to be swindled by the charlatans who posed to have miraculous powers (*astasiddhi*) to change the properties of elements of nature. Of course, this kind of charlatanism is still at work.

Again, when Bisvanath arrived at the age of seventeen, Dewan Rajiblochan Ghose died. He bequeathed a garden house to his orphaned grandson by his daughter. But suddenly Bisvanath's elder maternal-uncle turned up to him and whispered something in his ears which made him endorse the property in the name of his maternal-uncle. This we heard from our mother who justified the action. She used to say that it is better that he has signed away the title; otherwise, his maternal grandfather's property would have been gobbled up by his paternal-uncle! About the same time, when all the co-parceners of the old ancestral dwelling house situated in Madhu Roy Lane were selling it conjointly, Bisvanath endorsed his right in favor of his uncle. Our mother remonstrated with him for the whole day by saying, that if he gives away everything to his uncle, then what would be the case of her and her children? But about evening Bisvanath spoke with determination: "No, I must even cut the flesh off my body for my uncle who nurtured me in my youngest days!" By saying this, he went out and signed away his right to the ancestral house in favor of his uncle. This attitude towards his uncle and aunt Bisvanath had even in his last days. After being separated from the joint-family life a few years before his death, he used to narrate all the wrongs he had suffered from his uncle's family to his eldest son. During this time, once he cried out in anguish, "Let me die first, then my sons will turn all out!"

We have said that Bisvanath was uncared for in his younger days. His education was not even attended to. But at the request of the neighbors, his uncle sent him to Gourmohan Addy's school now-a-days called "Oriental Seminary." For a long time he used to go barefooted in the school, from Simulia to Ahiritola. One day, the teacher asked the reason of his coming barefooted. The poor boy answered: "My father is in Banaras, he will send me a pair of shoes to wear, I am awaiting it!" That the shoe-shops were not plentiful in those days in Calcutta, hence they



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were comparatively costly is to be presumed by this incident. It is said that at Gourmohan Addy's school, he studied under a teacher named Rasikchandra Chandra, whose second son Kaliprasad Chandra became the famous Swami Abhedananda of latter days. In the course of time, Bisvanath passed "Junior" and "Senior" examinations with credit and thus finished his scholastic career. Here it is to be noted that those of the gentry who were educated in Persian learning before the introduction of the education in English language, had hard time to earn their livelihood in the altered situation. Here, an interesting news is to be made public. The writer heard from the old men who studied at the time before the establishment of the Calcutta University saying, that Robinson Crusoe's "travels" used to be taught in the lower classes, and "Mysteries of the Court of London" in the Junior class! Perhaps British Imperialism was not so much race-conscious as in later days, when expunged English history and safe literature used to be selected as text courses.

After graduation Bisvanath engaged in some business but failed several times. When the writer tried to engage his hands in business, his mother said, "Business capacity does not run in your family. You will fail." Then he entered the firm of attorney Mr. Temple, as an articled clerk. The late Bhubanmohan Das, the father of celebrated Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das, was also a colleague of Bisvanath in articled-clerkship. He himself told the writer about it. In 1866 A.D. Bisvanath passed the attorneyship examination and conjointly with Ashutosh Dhur, another new attorney, established an attorney's office named "Dhur and Dutt." Later on, he separated himself from partnership with Ashutosh Dhur, and started a firm of his own.

Bisvanath got pre-Calcutta University education. Hence besides English, he was well-versed in Sanskrit, Bengalee, Persian, Arabic, Urdu and Hindi. He studied Sanskrit with Kali Bhattacharya in his *tol* at Goabagan. At one time, Kali Bhattacharya and his brother used to live in our house. Nibaran Bhattacharya, the son of Kalicharan, became a *Kathak* i.e., reciter of Puranas, etc. Bisvanath studied Sanskrit beginning

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with *Mugdhabodha Vyakarana* that was in vogue in Bengal for a long time. Besides Sanskrit learning, he was learned in Hindu astrology (*Jyotish*). The writer heard from his mother that in many cases Bisvanath used to draw the horoscopes of his own children. Those who say that the writer's father did not know Sanskrit and was steeped in English learning only, do not know the true facts. In his days, Sanskrit religious literature was a sealed book as yet to the public. Rather, Tantrika religious literature was in vogue. After his demise, among the debris of his library which was partially swindled later on by the relatives, as it was kept with them, the writer has seen English, Persian and Sanskrit books. Also, the translation of Srimat-Bhagavata published by one Barat was with these books. History was his *forte*. The writer remembers the names of following books among the remnants of the library that was preserved after the family misfortune: The life of Julius Cæsar, the life of Charles XII of Sweden in French, pictorial texts of History of Rome, in several volumes, etc. Besides, Samuel Johnson's dictionary in several volumes, some books in Persian, etc. There was an old Bible without any picture. [This book is deposited at Belur Math along with a big pictorial copy of the Bible by Cassel (it is dropped in the river by the Math authorities) by the writer's elder brother Mahendranath after the demise of Swami Vivekananda]. He wrote a Bengalee novel named "Sulochana", the plot being laid at Nuddea. The book was published in 1880 A.D. It was appreciated by the reading public of the time. But as he was then not in an affluent state, he got it published in the name of his father's cousin Gopal-chandra Datta who was then a well-known figure in Calcutta. (A copy of the book is to be had in Bangia Sahitya Parishad of Calcutta. A seller of old books informed the writer that he has sold a copy of it only several years ago). Before his death he wrote a small book called "Sistachar Paddhati" in Bengalee and Hindi in A.D. 1882, and published by Hiralal Dhole of Burtola. In it he said, that he has travelled over the whole of India except the South, but found that lots of social superstitions are prevalent amongst the people, and these are harmful to them. The second part of the book was not published due to his sudden demise.

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But the first part went through a second edition published by one Basak.

Bisvanath was the product of old Hindu-Moslem Civilization and the new English culture spreading in his time. He had European friends. He had tastes for both. In dress, food and etiquette he followed the old joint Hindu-Moslem tradition. Again, in some matters of daily life he followed European custom like other gentry of the period. But he never deviated from orthodox traditions. He gave *dakshinas* to the Brahmans, and honored the *pirs* as well. There is no tradition that he ever joined any reform movement, though he defended the girl-widow remarriage introduced by Pandit Iswarchandra Vidyasagar. Two such marriages took place in the families of our neighbors. It created a commotion in society. But the writer's parents defended it as just and proper.

It has been alleged that Swami Vivekananda's father was a respecter of the Bible and Dewan-i-Hafiz. Even some bigoted Brahman while scurrilously attacking Swami Vivekananda slandered his father as well. He attacked them as, "Like father like son" in the matter of eating, which is a downright lie. But does this custodian of Brahmanism know about habits of life of all the Hindus living in this vast sub-continent? Has he ever consulted the ancient religious texts? The Nibandhas written in the Mohammedan period are no injunctions of the *sastras*. Again, some disciples of Ramakrishna have made a slanting remark that Bisvanath advised his son to read the Bible and Dewan-i-Hafiz as he was unacquainted with Hindu religious thoughts. But do these learned men have ever realized that Hinduism in its last analysis only talk of Pantheism. But those who are in quest for Monotheism cannot be satisfied with Hindu pantheistic ideas. The history of the varied religious experiences of the Indians bears witness to it. It seems to these worthies that, as if not knowing the intricacies of Vedanta and cabalistic mysticism of Yoga amounts to ignorance and sin and doing injustice to Indian religion. But these ideologies are not all that exhaust the Indo-Aryan religious experiences. These holymen perhaps were not aware of the historical fact that Bengal has never been the land of the Veda and the Vedanta. It has been the land of Tantra

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introduced by Mahayana Buddhism. Later on, a Brahmanical adaptation of it was made by the Agambagishes. The Kayasthas have stuck to the Tantra from the days of the imperial Palas. The Dattas of Simulia like most of the Kayasthas are Saktas by religion.[33] Further, these holymen forgot that to what a revolting condition Brahmanism had been brought by priesthood.[34] It was nauseating; it required Rammohan Roy and his disciples to clean the augean stable to a certain extent. In the name of Indo-Aryan religion, brutality and bestiality were practised. Those holymen came at the fag end of the reformation; they forgot to recognize the fact of the half-century fight of the reformers to dispel the darkness that enveloped the Hindus for centuries. They ignored history and jumped to a biassed conclusion. They did not realize the dialectics of Historical Materialism. If it be a sin to be free from abject superstitions and to be liberal in religious outlook, then the writer vicariously admits that sin on the part of his father and the elders of his family. If it be a sin to be a reader of comparative religion and to respect all cults, then Bisvanath had committed that sin. The monk-disciples of Ramakrishna have conveniently forgotten that their Guru himself was a respecter of all cults with their saints. That was his *forte* and that is why many people were drawn towards him, and not to a revivalist of Brahmanism! On the contrary, the writer is proud of his family's liberal outlook. As Karl Marx said, that he was thankful to his father for bringing him out of Jewish ghetto outlook; similarly, the writer is thankful to the elders of his family for creating an intellectual and social liberal outlook of life, rather than rotting in mediæval quigmire which indirectly is a creation of a long-drawn foreign rule under which the Hindus lived. The writer is grateful to his father for bringing the younger generation out of the octopus of priestly

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33. Vide discussion about caste-alignment in writer's "Sociology in Vaishnava Literature" (in Bengalee).

34. The author of *Scir-Ul-Mutaksharin* has said that in the eighteenth century many of the Hindu Zamindars were secretly believing in Shiah form of Islam. What was the alternative to the revolting practices that were going on in the name of Hinduism!

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superstitions and pointing out a new ideal of life. Bisvanath was a liberal Indian with a synthetic mind. That is the reason why his offsprings became "radicals" in ways of thinking. Swami Vivekananda was the product of his social environment.

To come back to Bisvanath, a story was narrated by the writer's elder sister Swarnamayi Devi that, while Narendranath was a fanatical Brahmo, he was a vegetarian in his diet. Once, Narendranath quarrelled with his sister by charging her for giving curry from which fish was taken out. In anger, Narendranath threw away the curry pot. His father was bathing himself at the courtyard at that time. Hearing the squabble, Bisvanath angrily shouted out, "His fourteen generations have lived on clams and snails (shell-fishes), now he has become a *Brahmadaitya* (a term of ridicule for the Brahmos) and would not eat fish!" That showed his attitude towards the new-fangled movements of the day.

Bisvanath had weakness vis-a-vis his uncle. Further, living in a joint-family he had no respite to amass money for himself. In the beginning, he had to maintain his uncle's family with the dependants. He brought up two cousins of his. But he had no opportunity to do anything for his own advancement. It used to be said by the public that there were three luckymen in Calcutta at that time, and one of them was Bisvanath Datta. He used to buy properties from the sales of the Courts and sell them again. But he used to buy in the name of his wife Bhubaneshwari Devi. The writer was informed by his mother, that once a *dargah* in the vicinity of Karbela Tank was bought in her name. She used to get 5 to 6 rupees daily from it. But it was sold out by her husband as she told the present-writer. On the contrary, the writer's elder brother Mahendranath says, that the dargah of Manikpir situated on the Upper Circular Road and its hinterland occupied by the tenants were bought by Bisvanath in the name of his wife. He had the intention of keeping it reserved for his eldest son, so that the income may serve as his pocket-money.

One day, the Moslem tenants came up to Bisvanath and complained that they could not pay the rents. Bisvanath answered

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that he was not the owner, they should apply to the proprietress of the property. Thereupon, they repaired to Bhubaneshwari Devi. They repeated their application. Hearing their case, she ordered, "Your rents are not to be taken (Makub)."

From that time on, the tenants ceased paying rents. Then came the reverses of the family and the property was lost sight of. Thus gradually the tenants got the right of adverse possession. Recently, a lawyer informed the present-writer that once two Mohammedan clients from the dargah land came to him for a suit, but they could not produce any title-deed to the land they occupy, though they are squatting on it for two generations! The writer has narrated here what he has heard from both the sources.

Another illustration of the old days of communal amity is narrated here. From the time of Muharram, the Moslems beating the drums used to come to the Hindu localities to collect money for their festival. Hearing the beating of the drums, the young-folks used to get inquisitive about the story that led to *"Goanra"* as the festival of Muharram is called by the Hindus. It was a day of festival with the Hindus too. In Upper India, the Hindus largely participated in the processions. In Calcutta, as late as 1906, the writer has seen Bengalee-Hindu boys participating in the procession and playing *lathi* (stick) therein. From our mother we heard about the fight of Karbela, and used to weep and sigh in hearing the tragic fates of Hassan and Hussein.

Again, an old and lame Faqir used to come to our neighborhood every evening to collect money for the dargah of Manikpir. He was an inseparable part of our boyish life. We, the boys and the girls of the big house of ours, used to sit on a bench near main entrance of the house anxiously waiting for the Faqir. Suddenly, a shrill cry would enter our ears—*Manik Pir-r-r!* Then we understood that the expectant Faqir has entered our lane. The next scene was, that with an old-fashioned big kerosine-lamp (*cheragh*) the expectant Faqir would enter our front door, and putting the lamp-soot on our foreheads as *Tilak* would bless us: "Let the Pir grant you a long life." And we used to pay him a pice for the Pir. But these

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scenes of communal amity and domestication of diverse religious customs have disappeared long ago from the life of Bengal. These stories of our mother's behaviors towards her Moslem tenants and sorrowfully narrating the tragedy of Karbela, would sound strange in the days of "Two-Nation" theory; hence a little of the veil of the immediate past that is already enshrouded in the limbo of oblivion is lifted here.

The case of Zamindary in the Sunderbans is another case of dispossessment of the property. The lot no. 71, otherwise known as Amradanga, is a Taluq of more than eleven thousand bighas of land. It was bought in the name of Bhubaneshwari Devi. It had an income of several thousands of rupees per year in former days, though much of it remained fallow and unreclaimed. It is said that originally it was leased from the Government by a Mohammedan lady. It was handed over to Bisvanath in *lieu* of cost of a suit.

Here, an interesting story is to be narrated that has got some connection with Bisvanath's legal career. He had many Mohammedan clients. One of them was an old Mughal lady living in the suburban area between Narikeldanga and the New Canal. From the residence of this aristocratic Mughal family, the present-day name of the place "Mughalbagan" has taken its rise. This Mughal lady claimed to be a descendant of the historical General Gurgan Khan, the Commander-in-Chief of Nawab Mir Kasim, the Subedar of Bengal. Bengal history says that he was an Armenian Christian whose brother Pedro was in the service of the English East India Company. Further, history attests that Mir Kasim had him murdered as he suspected his loyalty. History drops its curtain on Gurgan (Gregorien?) Khan so far. But in the nineteenth century this old Mohammedan lady claimed to be a descendant of the ill-fated general. Perhaps, through the vicissitudes of family tragedy, this family turned Mohammedan and being light-skinned persons, were taken in the so-called Mughal aristocratic circle.

This Mughal lady used to visit our house; she was our father's client as long as she lived. When Bisvanath wanted to regale his friends with Mughal *cuisine*, this lady used to send her cook for the purpose. A man with a big wooden tray bearing lots of

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appropriate spices on it used to come to our house. Standing outside the kitchen, this man used to direct the Brahman-cook to prepare the various dishes by reading from his text on culinary art. In this way, *polau, challau,* various kinds of *viands* of meat, used to be prepared. But the Bengalee guests after eating the delicious Mughal dishes were in the habit of pronouncing the judgment: not well-done, half-boiled, half-cooked, etc.! Mughal-fashioned cuisine never suited their taste. In this way, the story of Bisvanath's love for Mohammedan tastes and of his polau-feast grow up. The fact of Bisvanath's hospitality and love of music is still remembered by some persons of Calcutta. An octogenarian gentleman narrated to the writer of what he had heard from his father: "In the locality of Simla, Bisvanath Datta was famous for his lavishness in spending money. Every Saturday and Sunday, he used to hold musical *soiree* and entertained his guests with polao-feast."

Now, to resume our story of the Zamindary. Once there was a quarrel with the neighboring zamindar, Ram Guha of Hugal-kuria regarding a boundary line. Bisvanath ordered the naib of the zamindar Guha to be pinned on the water boundary line for erasing the boundary demarcation. The Zamindar on the opposite side exclaimed, "What a tyrannical Zamindar". Such is the zamindary system, even a kind-hearted man becomes stern in case of necessity. This story was narrated by Nepalchandra Datta to the writer.

One day, Bisvanath's uncle Kaliprasad begged Bhubaneshwari Devi to hand over the title-deed to him as he needed it. For the whole day Kaliprasad importuned her for it. But knowing the character of her uncle-in-law, she did not hand over the deed. At last towards the evening, Kaliprasad in a vulgar language said: "Is it your father's property?" Hearing it, she angrily threw the paper at him. In the evening, Bisvanath came home from the Court, and he was informed of the happening. He scolded his wife and said, "Alas! why did you hand over the document?" Bhubaneshwari Devi answered, "I could not stand the insult." Thereupon, as he was weak before his uncle, Bisvanath had to accede to his request. It was mortgaged by his uncle, and perhaps for the last stroke on his zamindary, Bisvanath

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borrowed something more on the loan. It was mortgaged to one Taraknath Datta of Hatkhola as an "English" or "Usufructuary mortgage"; the exact legal instrument of transfer is unknown to the writer. Several years later, when Bisvanath was away in Upper India, the same Taraknath Datta asked the writer's second brother-in-law, Harimohan Ghose to take back the Taluq as he was not getting benefit out of it. Harimohan wrote to his father-in-law about it. But he answered, "Do not worry, the deed of the mortgage is written in such a way that it will come back after being released from the debt." Then the family reverses came and all the properties were lost sight of. Several years later, the writer talked about the recovery of the Taluk. Hearing it, Swami Brahmananda expressed the desire of recovering the property on behalf of Belur Math, but Swami Vivekananda dissuaded him. Then the matter was dropped at that time. Still later, when the writer came of age, every relative was urging him to recover the property. Hence, he ransacked the Registration Offices and got a copy of the mortgage deed. Further, he made an enquiry, about the legal situation of the Taluq. It transpired that the original mortgagee has transferred the property to others without giving due notice to the mortgager. And there were two lessees on the Taluq. In reading the document the lawyers said that the case was good. Hence the writer issued two notices drawn by an attorney on the present lessees and was preparing for filing a suit in the Calcutta High Court. But very soon in 1907 A.D., he was sentenced to jail on account of sedition charges as the editor of "Jugantar". The matter stopped there for the time being. But in his absence, the writer's eldest nephew late Brojomohan Ghosh tried to file a case. He collected further documents in connection with the mortgage. Even late Nafar Pal Chowdhuri, a zamindar of Nuddea, wanted to buy up the case as the property was contiguous to his zamindary at Sundarbans. Several lawyers also expressed their desire to buy up the case. But the writer's elder brother did not agree to it. In the meantime Brojomohan died and the documentary papers were led astray and could not be recovered. When the writer came back to India after his long term of exile from the West, the relatives again urged him to take up the case. He again made

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an enquiry about the Taluq. The neighboring landlord informed him, that the old tenants still call it as the "Zamindary of Bhubaneshwari Devi". But as most of papers were lost the writer was contemplating of procuring fresh copies of the documents, but other things were not equal at the time. Hence delay took place. In the meantime, the writer was trapped to jail several times during the "Civil Disobedience Movement" started by the Indian National Congress. At last in 1931 A.D. the mortgage case became barred by limitation.

Thus we see that Bisvanath had soft spots in his heart regarding his uncle who was the *Pater familias*. His aunt bossed over the family and Bhubaneshwari had to suffer all her life silently. She was a lady who was not given to much talking. She suffered patiently under the rule of her uncle-in-law and his wife. She herself narrated to the writer when he was young, that a time had passed when she had only one piece of sari to put on, while other daughters-in-law had plenty. At last Bisvanath perceived the inequity and misery under which his wife was suffering. He revolted and complained, "How is it that I who earn so much money see that my wife does not get belliful to eat!" But this temporary revolt did not have any permanent effect in a joint-family. Bisvanath had no will to break away from the joint-family system, lorded by his uncle and aunt who nurtured him when he became an orphan. Hence, unjust treatment of Bisvanath's family under the "pater familias" system continued till just a few years before his death, as the uncle's family made him separate in order to deprive him of the share of the family property due to him under the joint-family system of Bengal School of Hindu Law. These matters will explain how economic reverses befell our family. After separation, our family removed temporarily from the ancestral place and hired a house at 7, Bhairav Biswas Lane, where Narendranath studied to prepare himself for the B. A. Examination.

These family secrets are given out here, in order to show, that what a curse the Hindu joint-family system is. Those who cry hoarse over the sanctity of the system, do not either have experience of the working condition of the system or ignore the facts about family feud, squabble, bitterness, tragedy and injustice that

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lie hidden behind it.[35] It is an outmoded system in a commercial and industrial society. Its existence only helps the lawyer brood. There is no other plea for it in the modern world. "A kinsman's feud" is proverbial in a Hindu home. The example of the Kurus and the Pandavas are cited from the Mahabharata as an illustration. The question is, whether this bickering among kinsmen exists only among the Hindus or is it a universal phenomenon? The writer has not heard about it in foreign countries where "single family" system prevails. The system does not engender family pride as we have had a bitter experience of it. It is peculiar to Hindu character, and its source must be the joint-family system which nurses personal jealousy and bitterness leading to life-long feud.

As Bisvanath was weak *vis-a-vis* the joint-family life with his uncle's family, he was weak also in dealings with his friends and subordinates. They cheated and swindled him. We would not enlarge our narration by citing further cases. *A propos* the professional career of Bisvanath, we would like to mention two incidents. The two bulging out piazzas of the Barristers' Library in Calcutta High Court building, are called "Asia Minors". It is he and the attorney group of his time that gave that sobriquet! Again, in a letter written from Lucknow to his cousin Taraknath, dated 13th June, 1872, he says, that, "At my suggestion Mr. J. the head of the Bar is going on Monday to call a meeting of us all for forming an association, a library and a hall." Thus, the formation of the Lucknow Bar Association is to be traced from his suggestion.

During the last flickering of his life, Bisvanath contracted diabetes while staying outside Bengal. For the last month before his death he was suffering from an attack of heart. The doctor put him in bed for a month for rest. After resting, he went to his office. In the evening he came back home and complained to his wife that as his client took him to a long distance in Alipore

35. Many novels and dramas describing the tragedy of joint-family life have been written by powerful writers. The victims of the system can see themselves depicted in these books. The autobiography of Saradasundari Devi (Keshabchandra Sen's mother) gives hints about the injustice and tragedy of a joint-family life as well.

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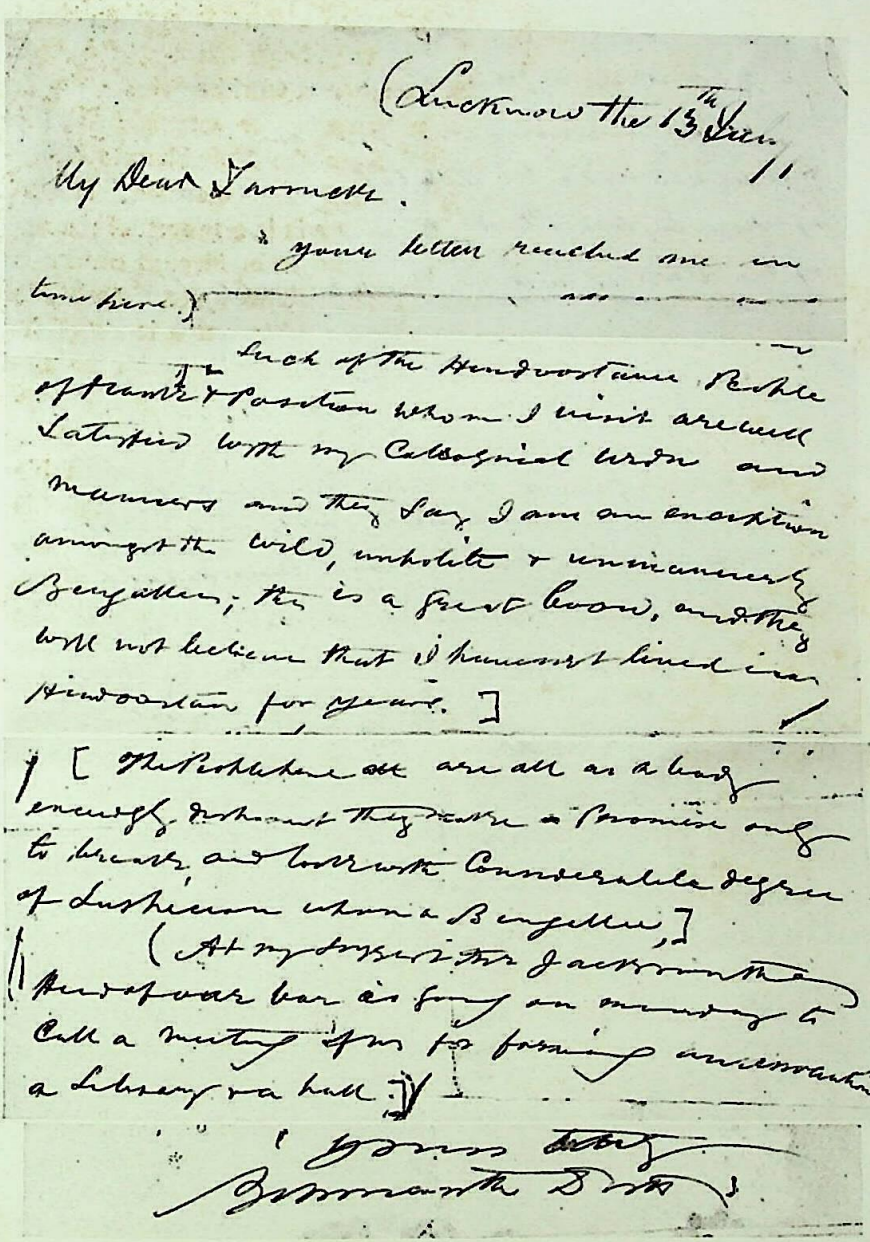

Facsimile of the Handwriting of Bisvanath Datta, the father of Swami Vivekananda

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for inspection of papers, he was feeling pain in the heart. He asked her to rub the prescribed ointment after supper. After supper he was writing something and by his left hand was smoking his hookah; but about 9 P. M. he got up and voluntarily began to vomit. In the meantime the heart slowly stopped beating and he was no more. It was Saturday night in the month of Magh B.S., A.D. 1884. He kept his clothes ready for Sunday morning when he had an appointment to visit some family to select a bride for his eldest son. But that meeting never took place.

Here, the question of marriage of Narendranath comes up. It must be said here that, as this part of Narendranath's life has been discussed in the biographies, the matter must be cleared here. Marriage-proposals from important parties came during Bisvanath's life-time. After his demise, proposals from quarters high up in society came as well. From the mother the writer heard that one of Bisvanath's friends from school days and latter-on, an attorney colleague of the High Court, proposed that he would bear the expenses of the family law-suit if Narendra-nath marries his grand-daughter. Again, right from the Ramakrishna circle, a house-holder devotee, the late Balaram Basu, a Zamindar of Cuttack made similar offer to Narendranath if he would marry his daughter. Further, the late Tulsiram Ghose, the eldest brother-in-law of Balaram Basu, brought a proposal for marriage with the convent-educated only daughter of R. Mitra a rich Calcutta Barrister. But all these proposals were of no avail . They fell on deaf ears. As the last news concerning Bisvanath it is to be mentioned here, that before his sudden demise the agents of the Hyderabad Nizam were negotiating with him to take him to Hyderabad in a case concerning the Nizam. It was agreed that he would start in Magh for Hyderabad. He used to say that he had ridden all sorts of vehicles save the elephant, but in Hyderabad he will have the opportunity to ride on elephant. But that opportunity never came.

Bisvanath died suddenly while on the road to prosperity again. Here our narration closes concerning him. But one thing should remain unsaid that has got some social value. Bisvanath's old class-mate and a friend became the office-master of his firm in

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its latter phase. But the firm was not going in order. Bisvanath requested his second son-in-law Harimohan Ghose to look into the accounts and to keep it in order. Harimohan himself narrated to the present-writer that at the request of his father-in-law he twice visited the office and began to inspect the papers. He saw Bisvanath's friend as the office-master of the place. But to his amazement, he found out that all the clerks were whispering among themselves and secreting the papers. The said friend on some pretext or other was borrowing money in the name of Bisvanath for the firm and thus encumbering him. Seeing these things, Harimohan desisted from visiting the office any longer. Only when his eldest son after coming of age, began to inspect the papers, then some check was exercised on the clerks.

Regarding this friend, Bisvanath's another friend Nepalchandra Datta, while one day narrating to the writer about the incidents of Bisvanath's life in 1904, spoke about the aforementioned person and blurted out: "That fellow has still kept to himself your father's gold watch and chain!" The allusion about the gold watch and chain as the writer heard from his mother is this: Long ago before Bisvanath went outside Bengal, a quarrel ensued between our mother and her elder brother-in-law Kedarnath, over some monetary affair. Bhubaneshwari in anger said,"I will pound that gold watch and chain into powder unless I get my thing returned." The watch and the chain were worth Rs. 300|- in those days. To get out of this dilemma of the family quarrel, Bisvanath removed the watch and the chain and deposited it with his friend as a safe custody in a neutral place. But those things were never returned!

One more incident of social value and the narration about Bisvanath is closed. After his sudden demise, his family found itself cut off from the rest of the world. Persecution began to come from inside the family. There was no helping hand from any quarter. Even Bisvanath's own younger cousin whom he nurtured in his younger days, became indifferent to the welfare of his family. Narendranath in distress got no helping hand from any quarter. Only once he officiated as a Headmaster for a month in the Bowbazar branch of the Metropolitan Institution.

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SRI MAHENDRANATH DATTA
Constantinople, 1898

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Later, as repeatedly narrated by the late Haramohan Mitra, a class-mate of Narendranath, hearing that a teachership was vacant in the City Collegiate School owned by the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, Narendranath applied to Pandit Shivnath Sastri for the same post. But Pandit Sastri evaded the request by saying: "Naren, you could not procure a job anywhere!" Narendranath was a member of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj and used to sing in the choir. But at that time he was visiting Ramakrishna Paramhansa. He has slipped out of their hands. Perhaps this accounts for the refusal. Haramohan ended the story by telling the present-writer, that Narendranath told him, "These Brahmos only help each other but not to an outsider."

Thus we found to our cost, that after Bisvanath's death, none turned up to give a helping hand to his bereaved family. The writer used to be repeatedly told by his mother and grand-mother, that, our relatives existed all over Calcutta. But all disappeared after the death of Bisvanath Datta, Attorney-at-Law, Calcutta High Court! Even Bisvanath's friends of his *Polao-feasts* knew us not any longer! Society forgot us; we were left out to our struggle for existence in the cold competitive world. Truly the American poetess Ella Wheeler Wilcox, once an admirer of Swamiji, has penned down the following couplet:

"You laugh the world laughs with you,
You weep, you weep alone!"

This is the natural way of the capitalist society. Then came further disaster. Narendranath, on whom his father relied so much, left his family for good and turned a monk. Our main hope was our maternal grand-mother. We stayed with her till 1903. She supported us and suffered for us. She had to part with her four cottahs of rented land situated on Baloram Dey Street, for conducting the law-suit brought against us by our aunt. In this way the law-suit helped nobody except the touts.

Later, in 1896 the writer's elder brother Mahendranath, born on August 1st. Sunday, Krishna-navami tithi, 1869, went to England to prosecute his study. From that time on till 1902 he

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did not communicate to his mother. From England he came to North Africa and travelled all over that region, South-East Europe, Near East,[36] South Russia, and not being allowed to enter Central Asia from Persia came back to India and went to Kashmir. During this time Bhubaneshwari passed anxious times for the news of her second son. At last after the demise of Swamiji, he came back to Calcutta.

Then came the turn of the present-writer. He joined the Revolutionary Movement in 1903. In 1907 he went to jail on the charge of sedition (sec. 124A) as the Editor of the paper *"Yugantar"* which was the organ of the Revolutionary Party of Bengal. At the time of the trial he did not defend himself as he gave a statement that he, "would take no part in the trial. He is responsible to none but to his country for his action". This has been the first Non-co-operation with the British Court of Justice in India. He got a sentence of rigorous imprisonment for a year. In jail he was put to grind oil-mill by the order of Col. Mulvany, a Roman Catholic Irishman![37]

After the writer's incarceration in jail, the Calcutta ladies assembled at Dr. Nilratan Sarkar's place and in a meeting congratulated Bhubaneshwari Devi for being the mother of such a son. They presented her an address imprinted on a silken cloth put on a silver tray. Also, a long poetry eulogizing the writer was printed and presented to her. Thereupon, Bhubaneshwari Devi answered: "Bhupen's work has just begun. I have dedicated him for the cause of the country." This utterance of hers was a source of inspiration to the country. In the Surat Session of the Indian National Congress, the President Rashbehari Ghose in the course of his speech said, that even the dames of Bengal were coming forward for the

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36. In Syria he twice became the guest of Abdul Baha Effendi, the head of the Persian Bahai movement. The Effendi himself said to the writer at New York, that a "Hindusthanee" twice became his guest.

37. The ill-treatment meted to the writer in the jail created an agitation in the nationalist press. As a result, Mulvany transferred him to Bhagalpur Jail. But persecution also began there at the commencement of the Alipur Bomb Case.

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service of the country, and he cited what the writer's mother has said in her reception.[38]

After release, the writer went to the U.S.A. *incognito*. During the time of release, an assistant-jailer advised the writer to escape to some foreign country, as he will be embroiled in the Alipur Bomb Case which was then going on. After release, he visited late Haridas Haldar, a revolutionary leader, who also advised him to leave Calcutta the very day and to seek an asylum in some foreign country. Coming home, his elder brother informed him, that plan has been made ready for his leaving India to seek an asylum in the U.S.A. The plan was suggested by the late Sister Christine (Miss Christina-Grinstidle). With the monetary help of the kind mother, the writer left Calcutta that evening and three or four days later was on the sea *enroute* to the U.S.A. via Europe. In the meantime, the Belur Math was searched as the police imagined that the writer was absconding by living incognito in that sanctuary!

In 1911, in the month of July, while the writer was a student of "Junior" class in the New York University, he dreamt that his mother has died in Calcutta. He was then living as a guest of Mrs. Edith Swanander whom Swamiji and the writer

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38. This fact is mentioned here as this allusion to the writer's mother made by Rashbehari Ghose in his presidential speech, has been misapplied by the Ganeshan Co., in its "History of the Congress" as Bepinchandra Pal's mother! But in "The History of the Indian National Congress", Vol. I (1885-1935), 2nd ed. 1946, the author Dr. Pattavi Sitaramiyya has given the correct version, though there are some discrepancies regarding details.

Similar mistake has been made by Leo. Tolstoi's biographer. It has been reported to the writer, that the biographer of the savant found a letter written by an Indian named "Das" amongst his papers. At this, he concluded that this must be the famous Chittaranjan Das, the late Swarajist leader of the Congress!

But in fact, the letter was written by Dr. Taraknath Das, who was then a student in the U.S.A. Tolstoi answered Das' letter regarding the freedom of India. But, the former evaded the real question. He blamed Vivekananda and others for deflecting the countrymen of the Buddha and Krishna to not-nonviolent way! The letter of Tolstoi, through the kind intermediation of American friends was published in "Twentieth Century" Magazine from New York in 1912. Thus the irresponsible writers present their scribblings as history!



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called "mother." The next day at the break-fast table, the writer narrated the story of the dream which was pooh-poohed by the old lady. A month later, while he was spending his summer vacation in a village, the letter written by Sister Nivedita on the twenty-fifth July, to Miss MacLeod from the Calcutta burning-ghat, intimating the mother's demise reached the writer's hand in his country resort. The letter was redirected by Miss MacLeod from London. It took a month to reach the writer's hands. The date of mother's death and the dream tallied exactly. Only the writer forgot the date of the day on which he dreamt the sad dream; but the week agreed. Twice again, his dreams have tallied with actual happenings. It is a statement of facts; we leave the matter to the psycho-analyst and the occultist to unravel the mysteries of the dreams.

The writer's mother died of Meningitis on July 25, 1911, after returning from a pilgrimage to Puri accompanied by Swami Brahmananda of Belur Math. Previously she had made pilgrimages to Puri in 1900 and to North-India in 1903, accompanied by a Swami or a Brahmachari of the Math. Her life was a life of suffering and renunciation at the altar of family duties. The day when the writer was set free from jail he came back home after being treated at the places of late Haridas Haldar and Bepinchandra Pal. Mother complained that she always felt unhappy as lot of agitation was made in the press about the ill-treatment meted to the writer in the jail. Thereupon, the writer in joke answered: "You never got any recognition for being Vivekananda's mother, but you got public reception for being my mother." Indeed, she was nothing but an object of curiosity to some of her eldest son's party. She never got any recognition for her services.[39]

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39. Once Swami Vivekananda's American disciples were invited to a feast by a rich family of the neighborhood. Ramakrishna used to visit that house. A distant uncle of the writer told him that the host of the entertainment has asked him, that if the 'mems' wanted to see his mother, then a carriage will be sent to fetch her. Thereupon, the writer objected to it and answered that it was an impossible proposition. He was annoyed and said, "Well, I will talk to Vivekananda about it." Coming back home, the writer informed the mother about the proposal and said, it is not

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After the writer's return from exile in April 1925, lots of middle-aged men met him and narrated how after the writer's incarceration in jail, they used to visit his mother and talked about him with her. Some of them later on became the leaders of the congress and revolutionary groups.

Here, *a propos* the writer and his mother, something must be mentioned about Sister Nivedita which had a bearing on the writer's life. During the trial of the writer on the charge of sedition in 1907, Sister Nivedita evinced a great interest in the writer's case. She wanted to stand as surety for the bail even up to Rs. 20,000 as demanded at first by the Court. But it did not become necessary as others stood for the same. Yet, she was denounced by the then extant "Englishman," the organ of the British interests as "a traitor to her race." On this account, a few words must be mentioned here regarding her.

Sister Nivedita (Miss Margaret Elizabeth Noble) was born in Ulster, North-Ireland on 28th October, 1867.[40] Her ancestors migrated from Scotland to this part of Ireland. Hence, there is no love lost between the Protestants of Ulster and the indigenous Roman Catholics of Ireland. Since the latter part of the nineteenth century, these Protestants of Ulster are dubbing themselves as "Scotch-Irish," a new nomenclature supposedly coined by the historian Lord Bryce who was one of them. Yet, in the course of Ireland's history, many of her prominent nationalist leaders came from Ulster. Before the British parliamentary reform of the latter part of the nineteenth century, which enabled the Roman Catholics to enter the Parliament, the Universities and in the services, all the parliamentary oppositionsists

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possible. He never saw in his life a lady of the Datta family ever visiting that house. The writer further said, "As half of your body falls in my share, I will cut you into two with a see-saw if your eldest son insists about it." Later on, the mother narrated the incident to her eldest son. He was amused and asked her, "Did he really tell that on that man's face?" Now, this man though a Government servant, yet was a sycophant of this *nouveau riche* family. The proposal however never matured, perhaps due to writer's opposition or the host of the party getting better sense at last.

40. Regarding details of Sister Nivedita's life see the book written by Madame Raymond, a French lady, who travelled over three continents to gather the data.

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hailing from Ireland were Protestants. Sister Nivedita's grandfather Rev. Noble was one of such nationalists. He was a Wesleyan Clergyman and at the same time succoured the oppressed Roman Catholics. Sister's maternal-grandmother Mrs. Hamilton claimed to be of Macduff clan of Shakespearian fame.

Nivedita's father Rev. Samuel Noble, migrated to Manchester, England, after the birth of Margaret and another daughter. He also held the post of a clergyman in his life. After the demise of her father, in the course of time she became a school-mistress in England. Yet she cherished Irish Nationalism all through her life though she never dabbled in politics. In 1911, in the U.S.A., the writer used to cut joke at her nationalism by saying: "You are no Irish. You are a Scotch-Irish." But she always used to answer: "No, no, I am Irish." The nationalist tradition of her forbears made her a nationalist. The writer never heard any controversial question regarding the Protestants and the Roman Catholics from her lips. On the other hand, her English upbringing made her English in her social habits.

Her nationalist tradition made her quickly to identify herself with the cause of India's freedom. While a school-mistress, she met Swami Vivekananda in 1895 in London. She came to India in 1898 to consecrate herself for India's uplift.[41] When Swamiji returned from the West for the second time, he introduced a Japanese professor of art named Kakasu Okakura to India. Miss MacLeod told the writer in the U.S.A. in 1911, that it was she who was responsible for the introduction of Okakura, the Japanese artist. Perhaps it was she who found him out in Japan. Okakura, accompanied by another Japanese youngman named Hori, came to India and stayed at the Belur Math. Hori came as a student of Indian religion and later on transferred himself to Shanti-Niketan, Bolepur, where he died.

Okakura did not know much of English but it seems that he had written a manuscript dealing with Pan-Asiatic cultural connec-

41. Vide, "The Master as I saw him."

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tions. It was re-written by the Sister, as she told the writer.[42] It contained the stamp of Swamiji's ideology on Asia. The book was named, "The Ideals of the East." With the publication of the book, a *furore* went amongst the intellectuals of India. It was also alleged that he was the bearer of a Pan-Asiatic mission to unite the Asian countries against Occidental Imperialism. It is said that he met B. G. Tilak and others and talked over the same proposal. As a result, a batch of intellectuals of advanced views formed a loose group talking about politics. Some of Calcutta's notables and rich men were in it. This led to the hitch between the Sister and Swamiji which we have referred to before. After the demise of Swamiji, Nivedita cut herself aloof from the Ramakrishna Mission as she wanted to engage herself in politics. During this time, she went to Baroda on a lecturing tour and met Aurobinda Ghose to whom she informed of the political constellation that was forming in Calcutta.[43] Aurobinda came to Calcutta in 1902 A.D. and the "Executive Council" of the "Bengal Revolutionary Party" was formed. The Council consisted of five members, Nivedita being one of them.[44] During this time she used to deliver fiery lectures on Hindu social polity. She delivered a lecture at the Town Hall labelled "Dynamic Religion." Hearing it, the late Bepinchandra Pal exclaimed: "It is not dynamic religion, but dynamite!" Then she wrote a booklet called "Aggressive Hinduism" in which she said that, "Hinduism has become aggressive again." Indeed, her ideologies on India, was the ideologies of Swami Vivekananda. She never deviated from it. Her interpretation of India was the interpretation of Swamiji. Regarding it, she once said to the writer: "Bhupen, do you think that every European or American traveller in India, will find a Vivekananda like me to interpret him the Indian life!" The writer was criticising the foreigners who misinterpret India after their return home. Hence, came the above opportuned rejoinder.

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42. Okakura's second book "Awakening of Japan" was corrected by Miss Waldo of New York. She herself told the writer about it.
43. Regarding it see the writer's "Second War of Independence" (in Bengalee).
44. This was informed by Aurobinda himself to Madame Raymond when she visited him at Pondicherry.

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Nivedita's speeches and works in India, evoked the suspicion of the British-Indian police. Mr. Carlyle, the infamous Bengal Government official, once asked late Bhupendranath Basu whether she belonged to the Fenian group of Ireland. In Brooklyn in 1911 while she was expounding her pet theory of the Assyrian King Assur-ban-i-Pal being the same as Banasur of the Puranas, to the writer, he could not digest the hypothesis. Angrily she said: "Bhupen, when I will be hanged then you will understand it." Thereupon, the writer retorted, "You will never be hanged." She enquired why? The writer answered: "Your skin will save you." Mournfully she said, "Yes, that is true." The talk did not advanced any farther. During this time, she enquired of the writer, "How is your movement going on?" The writer answered that he must repeat what Devabrata Basu reminded her about her request to the party, not to tell her anything of the secret movement.[45] Nivedita was introduced by Mrs. Ole Bull to Peter Kropotkin. They all went to Norway sometimes for a summer vacation. There Kropotkin used to relate her about the tragic fates of his terrorist disciples: boys and girls. In 1907, before the writer's going to jail Nivedita explained to the writer about the nature of the Russian revolutionary movement. According to her, it was not a fight between the haves and have nots. She said the aristocrats are ranged on both sides. It seems, she was not cognizant of the Marxist movement started by Plekhanoff. She heard about Russia from the princely anarchist Kropotkin. In 1911 Sister Christine sailed for India from New York. We all bade her good-bye at the pier. While returning, we were still walking on the street, when an Indian companion excitedly cried out: "Mr. Datta, get up on the trottoir, otherwise the taxi-cab would be on you." The writer answered, "How can I, the Sister is still on the street. I am protecting her from behind. I have already beaconed to the driver to slow down his speed." Thereupon, the Indian gentleman said, "But if by chance the taxi be on you, then what would you do?" The writer answered, "Don't

45. Devabrata Basu visited the place of Nivedita as the reporter of "New India" to interview Swami Sadananda who had just returned from Japan. At that time this interlocution took place.

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be afraid, it is not India. Life is not so cheap in America." Hearing it, the Sister said, "You are right," and she laughingly narrated her contrary experience in Baghbazar, Calcutta. Some evening while going on a stroll on the banks of the river, an Indian notable, a very prominent litterateur, Sister Nivedita and Ganendra Brahmachari, these three formed the company. Suddenly a mad bull run amok amongst the crowd on the street. The passers-by instantly took to heels. Nobody came to protect the lady at her jeopardy! At last, when the danger was cleared, it was found out that the great litterateur was not to be found! Ganendra began to shout out: "Where is so-and-so." At last a voice came out from a distant thatched room which abounded in the locality, "I am here." The greatman practically followed the Chanakya policy. Ending her story, she congratulated the writer that he was not one of them.

Here is also to be noted that before the writer's incarceration in jail, Sister Nivedita presented him Peter Kropotkin's books: "Career of a Revolutionist," "In Russian and French Prisons" and the five volumes of Mazzini's writings.[46] She requested the writer to read Kropotkin's books before going to jail. As said before, she and Mrs. Ole Bull were great friends of Kropotkin. It was through the latter lady that Kropotkin sent words to the Indian revolutionaries in 1910 A.D., "to beware the fate that has overtaken the Russian revolutionaries after the debacle of 1906

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46. The first part of the autobiography of J. Mazzini was donated by the Sister to Bengal Revolutionary Party. It used to be circulated all over the country. It contains a program on "Guerilla War". All these books were deposited by the writer with a comrade named Keshubchandra Gupta, a nephew of Swami Sadananda of Belur Math and the elder brother of Swami Sankarananda (Amulyachandra Gupta) the present-day head of the Math. Keshub deposited the books with others before absconding from the Alipur Bomb Case trial. During police searches all over the country, these books used to be unearthed one by one. Nivedita used to say, "one by one my books are coming out!"

When Swami Sadananda visited Japan, Amulya Gupta accompanied him. It was the latter who brought the famous nationalist-revolutionary song "Ay mardano Hind Jawano, Jaldi leyo hatiar, fauz karo taiyar....." It was written by an Indian student from Lucknow named Prasad who was then studying in Japan. The song got universal circulation, and it used to be sung during the Alipur trial by the prisoners as "Indian Marseillaise."

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revolution. They are tearing each other to pieces!" Mrs. Bull communicated it to the writer when he met her at Greenacre.

When the writer bade good-bye of Sister Nivedita before going to jail, he requested her to look after his mother in his absence. This request as the mother said was kept by the Sister. She told mother that, "Bhupen has asked me to look after you."

The writer again met Sister Nivedita in the winter of 1909 in New York. At that time, she talked of Aurobinda who is not afraid of the "hangman's noose" that is trailing him. During this time, Nivedita and Prof. Jagadischandra Basu who was at Boston at that time, selected from the syllabus of the writer's Alma Mater, New York University, the courses that he would take in his under-graduate studies. Then he again met the Sister in New York in early 1911 as narrated beforehand.

*A propos* Nivedita's admiration for Aurobinda, it should be disclosed here that it was Nivedita's suggestion that Aurobinda should shift elsewhere out of the reach of the British-Indian police. As narrated before, the same has been the suggestion of Sister Christine in the case of the writer. Sister Christine was an American lady of German extraction. After the return of the writer in 1925 from his exile, Ramchandra Mazumdar an ex-revolutionary and a youngman who used to know both the above personages, repeatedly informed the writer that in 1910, when the rumour of Aurobinda's second arrest was in the air, it was Mazumdar who was sent to Nivedita to get the advice about the course that Aurobinda would take. Nivedita answered: "The leader at a distance can work as much as at home." Thereupon, Aurobinda repaired to the French territory.

While the writer met Nivedita again in New York in 1911 when she stayed there for some time in the U.S.A., she repeatedly requested the latter to specialize in history as that was the speciality of his family. During this period, one day Nivedita and the writer were invited to lunch at Miss Phillip's place. At the end of the lunch, during conversation Nivedita said: "Bhupen, I consider you consecrated. Don't marry." The import of these sayings: The hangman's noose trailing Aurobinda, and the writer is consecrated—are understandable to the revolutionaries

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only. This was the talk of a revolutionary with another revolutionary. The significance was understood by both of them. Nivedita was born a Protestant Christian, but died a Hindu in 1912 at Darjeeling. She consecrated her life for the cause of upliftment of the Indian people. The Indian nationalistic awakening was much indebted to her.

During this stay of Nivedita at the U.S.A., the writer informed the Sister about Mr. George Freeman, the sub-editor of the "Gaelic-American," the Irish nationalist paper. Mr. Freeman was a great friend of India. He once told the writer that he was the first person who got the Irish revolutionaries living in America to get interested in India's struggle for freedom, as it was one of the weak chains of English imperialism. Mr. Freeman had a chequered and interesting life. He was sent by Gladstone to Turkey to enquire about the Armenian massacres. He was the reporter of the "London Times" during the Russo-Turkish War. He exposed the sordid game by which the English occupied Egypt, to some parliamentarians, etc. In his old age, he settled in America as a revolutionary exile. While occupying himself with the journalistic work in America, he kept himself in touch with the nationalist elements all over the world. He was in touch with some Indian leaders at home and abroad. Through his subterranean way he used to circulate news about India's struggle for freedom. In America, he was the mentor of the Indian nationalist element.

One thing peculiar about him that he could not tolerate the English and the Jews though he called himself a socialist. He used to say that British Imperialism is being backed by Jewish finance-capital. Behind the exploiting policy of the British Imperialism lies the hands of the Jewish capitalists. He had many stories about notable persons to tell. He said, how the Russian-Czarist Government sent Madame Blavatsky to India to work in favor of Russia. How the British-Indian Government by getting scent of it through their agent, turned her out of India when she came there for the second time. How he met her after this incidence, etc. When this turning out of Blavatsky as a political suspect was narrated to Nivedita by the writer, she exclaimed: "Why, that was the common talk of London in that time." In hearing from

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the writer about Freeman, Nivedita got interested in him. She in her turn, reported about this friend of India to Mrs. Ole Bull who was then lying sick in Brooklyn at Mrs. E. Swanander's place. Thereupon, some Sunday, Mrs. Bull sent an invitation to meet her and dine at her place. Hearing that the meeting of the both has been arranged, the writer informed the Sister in a letter to warn Mrs. Bull to be guarded in her talk as he hates anything that is "Anglo-Saxon and Jew." Later, Nivedita informed the writer that Mrs. Bull has expressed thanks to the writer through her for the timely warning. They met, and in that time Mr. Freeman informed Nivedita that today he is a friend of India; yet during the Sepoy Mutiny the regiment in which he served, was ordered to proceed to India, but it got stuck at Sierra Leone and did not get any order to advance any further, thus he was saved from fighting the Indians!

During first time that the writer met Freeman at Prof. Barakatulla's place in New York in 1909, he informed that his family always had been in the British army. But from his talks no one could make out whether he was a Roman Catholic or a Protestant. Indeed, he was not a believer of any religion. Once, somebody asked him what is the difference between Christianity and Hinduism. He answered that both the religions speak about the same thing. But the difference is that while the Hindus practise it, the Christians do not!

Mr. Freeman was terribly against the Occidentals, as he has seen dire wrongs perpetrated by them, against the helpless Orientals. Hearing his fury against the Europeans, the writer joked, "Then you must have got colored-blood in you!" He answered, "Yes, yes, my grand-mother was an Andalausian lady. My grand-father while serving in the Peninsular War under Duke of Wellington married her." Thereupon, the writer retorted, "Then you have got shemitic blood in you." But he warded it off by saying, "No, Persian, as lots of Persians settled in Andalausia during Moorish rule." This bit of news the writer jocosely narrated to Nivedita that Freeman being an anti-Jew, won't have any shemitic blood in him through his grand-mother. Hence he makes her of Persian descent in order to keep his "Aryan" blood pure. Hearing it, Nivedita laughed and agreed with the writer's interpretation.

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After the end of the World War No. I, the writer was again in communication with him from Berlin in 1922. At that time, he was editing the paper "Irish Nationalist" and at the same time, belonged to a group which was against De Valera.

After the return of the writer to India in 1925, the writer read from an American paper at Sister Christine's place at Bosepara Lane, that Mr. George Freeman is dead! The paper further said that his real name was not George Freeman. He was of the "Geraldine clan" whose chief Lord FitzGerald made a rising for freedom during the reign of George III! He was born a Protestant and was of old English blood. Indeed he told the writer once that his ancestor was an Englishman. But these old English settlers became more "Irish" than the Irish themselves. He was also born in England. Thus ended the career of an international-revolutionary. Sister Nivedita came from the same Ulster stock, who inspite of being of Anglo-Saxon descent, put their country's cause above religion and race.

After the demise of Sister Nivedita, the writer wrote an obituary note in "Gaelic-American" that how a daughter of Erin fought her battle in another field and in another clime.

As regards the services of our mother to others, we illustrate the following incidence: In 1900 A.D. in the rainy season (Sravan B.C.), there was a heavy downpour of rain in Calcutta and around the place, which resulted in a deluge that lasted about a fortnight. Calcutta and its suburbs were cut off from each other. During this state of the city, mother Bhubaneshwari Devi sent cooked food-stuffs (*Luchi* and *Bhaji*) for the brahmachari inmates of Kakurgachi Yogodyan (Ramakrishna's Samadhi-place) where the disciples of Dr. Ramchandra Datta: Sures (later Jogeshwarananda) and Kali (Yogabinod) and others dwelt. The writer waist-deep in water had to wade through to reach the destination to deliver the food. On reaching there, the writer found that the pond has overflowed itself. The inmates of the garden were isolated from civilization. Sures exclaimed, this food-stuff will suffice for the evening puja. Later on, Sures informed the writer that food-stuffs to relieve them in their place of beleaguerment came only from three or four places viz., from

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the writer's mother, from the aunt of Kali and from some other places which he did not mention.

The disciples of Dr. Ramchandra Datta called Bhubaneshwari Devi, "Didimoni" (elder sister), on account of the relationship she had with Dr. Ramchandra. Kali used to take annual subscription from Bhubaneshwari Devi for the festival during the samadhi of Ramakrishna's ashes on Janmastami day. She also used to pay annual subscription of Rs. 10|-, to the Belur Math for Ramakrishna birth-day festival and some more again, for the birth-day festival of Swami Vivekananda. Either Swami Brahmananda or Swami Premananda used to fetch the subscriptions from Bhubaneshwari Devi. This payment continued even after her death, by her daughter Swarnamayi Devi till the older generation of Ramakrishna's disciples left their mortal coils.

This fact of succouring the sadhus of "Yogodyan" by Bhubaneshwari Devi through the intermediacy of the writer has been revealed again by a sadhu-disciple of Swami Yogabinod (Kali). Thus, in a recent letter written in Bengalee on Nov. 25, 1953, from Ramakrishna Math, established in 1906 at Simultala (Behar), Swami Yogabilas writes the following to the writer's elder brother, Mahendranath:

"Sri Ramakrishna Math
Simultala, E. I. R.
25th Nov. 1953.

Worshipful Sri Mahendranathji Maharaj,

By the kindness of gracious Sri Sri Thakur the book "Swami Vivekananda in Kasidham" has been received. I met you last at Kasi at the shelter of worshipful Latu Maharaj when perhaps you have returned from Badrinarayan.

While living in Calcutta from the time of the propaganda of the old "Yugantar", I have been cognizant of Mahatma Sri Bhupendada. When Yogodyan was nearly submerged in water, he binding *roti tarkari*[47] across his breast came and fed worshipful Swami Yogabinod. Such a "man" is he!.....our repeated pranams to you. Jai Prabhu Ramakrishna!

Humble servant,
Yogabilas."

47. Actually fried bread i.e., Bengalee Luchi and vegetable accompaniments.

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Here it should be mentioned that our maternal grand-mother's house No. 7, Ramtanu Bose Lane was one of the *rendezvous* of the Ramakrishna sadhus till 1903. Ramakrishna used to visit that place while Dr. Ramchandra Datta lived there. Later on, he used to visit Naren there. Swamiji in his latter days, used to visit his mother now and then in that place. It was here that Nadu (Haren), the personal brahmachari attendant of Swamiji brought one morning the sad news of Swami Vivekananda's death. The writer broke the mournful news to the mother and the grandmother. Mother enquired what caused the sudden death. The writer answered, "the same as with father!" They were overpowered with grief and began to wail. A lady from the neighborhood came to comfort them. I was asked by Nadu to inform the Mitras of Simla Street. Later on, I went to my sister's house, where my brother-in-law has already been informed by Nadu. Both of us started for Belur Math. On arriving there, we found the sadhus of the Math and late Atulchandra Ghose and Sister Nivedita to be there. Then I saw mother coming with her eldest grandson Brojomohan Ghose. She wept bitterly, at last the sadhus sent her home and asked the writer to accompany her in order to keep her quiet by scolding if necessary. But she was sent back with her grandson. Nivedita weeping bade her good-bye. Then, when the funeral pyre has been lighted came Girishchandra Ghose, the dramatist. Swami Niranjanananda with a sigh exclaimed to him, "Naren is gone." Girishchandra answered, "not gone but he left the body!" In the meantime, Niranjanananda asked a brahmachari to take the impression of the feet of Swamiji with handkerchiefs dyed in red colour. It was done accordingly.

While talking with Girishchandra, Nivedita asked him: "Why did they drive the mother away?" It was explained to her. A few days later, Swami Nirvayananda (Kanai Maharaj) came to visit mother. Perhaps still a few days later, Swami Brahmananda with a Madrasi brahmachari came to condole her. Just at that time, Rev.Bhai Amritalal Basu of Navabidhan Brahmo Samaj came to offer his condolence to the writer. Entering the room, Rev.Basu exclaimed, "Rakhal Maharaj!" It was after many a decade that both of them met again. Basu asked, "Is it true that

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once Swamiji was sick with heart trouble at Hrishikesh, and a sadhu came and offered some medicine which cured him!" Swami Brahmananda answered, "yes." But this interview had an adverse effect. Swami Brahmananda reported to the Math that "Bhupen has slipped out of the hands! He has gone over to the Brahmos." The late Amritalal Basu came to our place to offer condolence to the writer as he used to mix with him, but he offered it to his mother as well. He said, "Convey my offering of condolence to your mother though I am unknown to her."

It has already been said that, Bisvanath married the only daughter of Nandalal Basu of the Basu family of Simulia, Calcutta. It is said that this family originally hailed from Hugly district (original area). The grandfather of Nandalal was Dewan Bhavanicharan Basu who served under the English East India Company.[48] His work was located at Agra. His wife was named Bhubaneshwari. Perhaps our mother inherited her name from her paternal great-grandmother. Bhavanicharan was noted for his munificence and hospitality. It is said that the tank of the guest-house (*Atithisala*) was nearly filled with leaves and glasses used by the guests for eating. Waiting till evening, when the last of the guests has been served, he used to take *havisyanya* (vegetarian) diet. His wife was like her husband.[49]

Bhavanicharan had four sons. His eldest son Ramnidhi also served under the East India Company.[50] His work also was located in Upper India as the writer heard from his mother. Ramnidhi[51] had three sons amongst whom the eldest was Haralal, who had two sons and a daughter. The eldest son was named Kailaschandra and the other one was named Jadunath. The youngest son of Ramnidhi was Nandalal, the father of Bhubaneshwari Devi, the wife of Bisvanath. Bhubaneshwari was born Circa, 1841 A.D. The younger brother of Ramnidhi was Ramtanu who was a "Farsi" lawyer of the time.

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48-50. Manmathanath Ghose: "Sekaler Lok" (in Bengalee), pp. 4-5, 1330, B.S.

51. According to M. Ghose he had four sons. But we never heard of it. Ramnidhi's landed property was divided among his three sons.

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An incident should be put down here in connection with Nandalal Basu, the maternal grand-father of Swami Vivekananda. At the time when Nandalal was a youngman of sixteen years of age, there was a ghost-house in Balaram Dey Street (now-a-days W. C. Banerji Street). In those days people used to resort to spooks for medicines! The man who was running the ghost-house made a lucrative business out of it. Nandalal and three other dare-devil youngmen conspired among themselves to put to test this spook-business and to expose it if possible. Thereupon, four of them prepared a bowl of milk-rice as an offering to the ghost. But they mixed some chemical to produce an after-effect after eating. They entered the ghost-house in the evening. It was a dark-room, on one side was a raised platform or bunk (*machan*) attached to a sidewall. Lots of supplicants were waiting for the ghost's appearance. Then suddenly some one jumped on the raised platform. It was apparent that the ghost has appeared. The sickmen began to describe their complaints. The turn of Nandalal and Co., came. They too laid bare their ailments and offered to the ghost their votive milk-rice. The ghost heard everything and began to eat the delicious offering. The sound of eating was being audible. But after some time, a violent sound of retching began to be heard! Instantly, some of the youngmen grabbed the ghost, some lighted the candle-stick which they had with them. At last it was found out that the ghost was no one else than a man of the neighborhood who in collusion with another man was carrying on this spooky trick![52] This story the writer repeatedly heard from our mother and used to be amused over it.

There had been a tradition in our maternal-uncle's family, that our mother's great-grandfather during his retirement from Agra, bought a pair of slaves: male and female, and brought them down to Calcutta with him. He married them in Calcutta. Later on, he manumitted them. Being freed, the quondam slaves established a shop in Balaram Dey Street. Their children called themselves of Kayastha caste. The son took the surname "Datta"

52. These are still being done everywhere in India in the name of religion. Kautilya sanctioned such tricks for the benefit of the State. "Nepalbaba" is not an exotic instance in India.

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and both the brother and sister, were married to the great Kulin family of West Bengal—the Mitras of Mandir family. At the time of the marriage of the writer's parents, the son of this former slave pairs,—Datta, as the representative of the locality, claimed village-due (*Grambhati*) from the bride-groom's guardian and after his granting permission, the bride-groom could return home! Our mother used to ridicule all through her life, that the son of the slave of her great-grand-father realized the "Grambhati" on behalf of the society. To those who think that the Hindu *Varna*-system is unchanging and Caste-system is rigid, the illustration is pointed out as a food for reflection regarding their static view of Hindu Society.

Now, we would make a digression in delineating a short sketch of the life of Kailaschandra Basu, the cousin-brother of Bhubaneshwari Devi. As this delineation throws a side-light on the social condition of the time, we shall be interested here in following the life-sketch.

As Bhubaneshwari Devi had no brother of her own, naturally, Nandalal's nephews were regarded as the maternal-uncles of her children. Regarding the eldest maternal-uncle of Narendranath, Kailaschandra Basu, we will quote something from the life-history of the latter;[53] as already said, it throws some more light on the social condition of the time. Kailaschandra Basu was born about 1827 A.D. He was at first educated in Gourmohan Auddy's school now-a-days called—Oriental Seminary. Then he entered the Hindu College. But at the demise of his father in his early days, he had to get a job in some English firm. Later about 1846, he entered the Government service. At that time, Rev. Alexander Duff was delivering a series of lectures on Christianity in the Free Church Institution Hall at Nimtolla Ghat Street. Young Kailaschandra used to attend this course of lectures. But at the end of each lecture, he used to challenge the arguments of Rev. Duff and to expose his fallacies. The audience used to be charmed in hearing the argumentative power of young Kailaschandra. At this time, he wrote a booklet in

53. Manmathanath Ghose: "Sekaler Lok" (in Bengalee) 1330 B.S.

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English entitled "Christianity, what is it?" It is needless to say that he was buttressed in his belief in Hinduism by being coached in Vedanta and other Hindu religious texts in the school named "Tattabodhini Patsala" which was founded by Maharshi Devendranath Tagore and others.

In 1849 Kailaschandra started an English monthly magazine called "The Literary Chronicle." It was the first instance that an Indian edited an English monthly paper. The magazine lasted for two years only. Amongst the thoughtful articles contributed in it by Kailaschandra, one was on a "Comparative study of Hindu and European drama." This was later on revised and published in a booklet form.

Thus his reputation as a writer was not only assured but as an orator was established when he spoke against "Charter Committee." In 1853 Sir Charles Wood, the President of the Board of Control, brought a resolution in the House of Commons regarding the appointment of the Indians in Government service. At that time, it was being debated in the House of Commons that, on what conditions a new Charter would be granted to the East India Company. The resolution of Sir Charles did not provide for the appointment of the Indians in the Legislative Councils, in the Civil Service and in the Judicial Department. The resolution of Sir Charles Wood in the matter of renewal of the Charter to the East India Company fell short of the expectations of the Indians. Hence, on 21st July, 1853, there was a great gathering of the Indians irrespective of caste, creed, and color under the presidentship of Raja Radhakanta Dev to protest against the move in the House of Commons. The speech of twenty-five years old Kailaschandra was so appealing that henceforth he was regarded as a great speaker. At last as a result of the protest, the Bill was amended and the Indians got the right to enter the Civil Service.

In 1851, Dr. Mowat established "The Bethune Society" as the meeting-ground between the Indians and the Europeans for the discussion of art, literature and science. Kailaschandra was one of its foundation-members and became the Secretary of the society after the retirement of Ramchandra Mitra, and remained



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as such till his death. There he read many learned articles. In 1854 he read an essay there on "The Women of Bengal" which later on was published in a book form.

Kailaschandra was always attentive towards the cause of the upliftment of the Indian women. In 1856, 14th August he read an essay, "On the Education of Hindu females—how best achieved under the present circumstances of Hindu society." In this paper he discussed how in the contemporary adverse circumstance, the education of woman can be spread. In this paper he appealed powerfully to his fellow-countrymen to help the cause of female education. The essay was published in a book form. It was reviewed in the "Hindoo-Patriot" of 24th August, 1856.[54]

In 1860-1 Kailaschandra was appointed the first Secretary to the Civil Finance Commission of the Government, by Sir Richard Temple at the recommendation of Dr. Duff, who knew Kailas' merit since his debut as an opponent in the aforesaid religious controversy. Later on, when at the recommendation of the Indian Finance Minister in 1862, four high posts were created for the Indians, the Government remembering the praise of Sir Richard Temple of Kailaschandra, conferred one of those four posts to him. He adorned that post till the end. For a time he was the Assistant or Deputy Controller-General and at last was posted as the Superintendent of the Money Order Department of the Government. It is said that Sir Richard Temple selected him as one of the Secretaries of Bengal Government, but he expired before joining that post.[55] While this has been his official career, he was also busy with public and benevolent works. Service to literature and to country was his highest aim. Kailaschandra regularly used to contribute articles in "Bengal Recorder", "Morning Chronicle", "Citizen", "Phoenix", etc. Besides, he contributed occasional articles concerning advancement of India in "Indian Field," edited by Kishorichand Mitra,

54. Vide Manmathanath Ghose: "Selections from the writings of Girishchandra Ghose, the Founder and First editor of the "Hindoo Patriot" and the 'Bengalee' pp. 223-226.

55. M. N. Ghose: Op. cit., pp. 31-32.

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and "Hindoo Patriot" edited by Harishchandra Mukhopadhyaya and Girishchandra Ghose. After the demise of Harishchandra, for a time he became the joint-editor of the Hindoo Patriot. Even during the time of the sole editorship of Kristodas Pal, Kailaschandra used to contribute to the same paper regularly. In 1812, Girishchandra Ghose started the "Bengalee" paper to defend the rights of the tenants. Kailaschandra used to contribute in the same journal.

In 1863, the Uttarpara benevolent society (Hitakari Sabha) was started by a local zamindar of the place. Its object was: "To impart education to the poor, to help the needy, to distribute cloths to those who were without clothes, to give medicine to the sick, to help the poor widows and the orphans." In one of the anniversary meetings of this society, Kailaschandra read a paper on the "Claims of the Poor." In this paper, he, showing the useful work that the society was doing, appealed to the millionaires of the country, to come out and help the work of the benevolent society. He said that lack of education was the sole cause of the degradation of the country. Again, he demonstrated clearly that by imparting education to the poor tenants, the landlords will be benefitted. In this speech, his language was full of high moral order and sympathy to the poor. At the sequel of his speech, Kailaschandra appealed to the rich men of the country to alleviate the misery of the blind, lame, deaf and destitute members of the society. In the meeting place were present Keshabchandra Sen and Girishchandra Ghose. They in their spirited speeches supported the appeal of Kailaschandra Basu. The speech was printed in a book form and it was reviewed in the "Calcutta Review" of the time by the editor, the famous Col. Malleson who wrote thus:

"The author of this address is, if we mistake not, the able and indefatigable Secretary of the Bethune Society. To see him come forward in the noblest of all causes,—the cause of the poor,—is calculated to make those hope, who had begun to despair of the effect of education upon the natives of this great country,—for it is a striking proof of one, at least, of the tendencies which that education produces on the gentle nature of the Hindoo who may submit himself to its influence. We have

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ourselves read the lecture with the greatest pleasure. *It is admirable in style, and excellent in its moral tone.* Babu Koylas has set an example which, we believe, his countrymen will imitate and has made an appeal to which, we fervently hope, they may respond." Elsewhere the biographer has said that in a lecture at Uttarpara Public Library[56] Kailaschandra has prophesied that unless the condition of the Bengal peasantry be improved, Bengal can never be prosperous. What a prophetic instinct! But the bourgeoisie hearkened it not.

On 19th April 1867, Raja Radhakanta Dev died. A big meeting was held in commemoration of the deceased. Peoples of all shades of opinion joined in it. In the meeting it was proposed by a grandee, that a marble statue of the deceased be raised in his memory. But Kailaschandra, the friend of the poor, brought a counter-proposal that the money which is going to be raised to perpetuate the memory of Raja Radhakanta should be ear-marked as the "aid-fund" to help the poor widows and the orphan children. A fitting proposal for the memorial of him who fought for the continuance of the widow-burning! At the time of the appointment of the Executive Committee to raise fund for Raja Radhakanta Memorial, Kailaschandra became one of its zealous members.

In 1866, the celebrated Miss Mary Carpenter came to India. In Calcutta in consultation with Rev. Long, she convened a meeting of the highly-placed Indians and Europeans to establish a sociological society. There, in a spirited language Kailaschandra spoke of the necessity of such a society. Accordingly, the "Bengal Sociological Society" was established in 1867. The object was to investigate and collect data regarding social, mental and moral conditions of the people, conjointly by the Indians and the Europeans with the object of improving the society of Bengal. Justice Pheare was its first President. Kailaschandra from the very beginning was one of its active members. The society had four branches: Law, Education, Health, Economy and Commerce. Kailaschandra though was one of the

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56. "Puranokatha" (in Bengalee).

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members of the Health division, yet had sympathy with other lines of work of the society.

In 1867, 26th July, Kailaschandra under the auspices of the last named department of the society delivered a written speech on "Domestic Economy of the Hindus." In his speech he discussed the mutual relation of the members of the Hindu family, by tracing it from Manu and other Smritikars. He showed how through the fault of present-day customs and behaviors the society is suffering or may suffer in future. Then he showed how our society is on its downward process on account of excessive affection of the parents to their children and indulging in their luxuries, in obeying the dictates of the parents by giving good-bye to freedom of conscience, in the quarrel of the brothers living in a joint family, in incurring heavy expenses out of proportions in the time of marriage and *sraddha*. Then he said that formerly the women of the aristocratic families used to cultivate fine arts viz., music and dancing. The Mahabharata mentions it. But now-a-days, the cultivation of these innocent fine arts are regarded as improper in Hindu families. He exhorted everybody to re-introduce the instruction of these arts among Hindu women. This lecture has been collected in the book of Miss Mary Carpenter called "Six months in India."

In 1868, 26th. January died Ramgopal Ghose, the "Demosthenes of India." After it, Kailaschandra was requested by the Principal of the Hugly College, Mr. S. Lobb to deliver a lecture on the life of the deceased leader. He wrote to Kailas: "I for one, am surfeited with Socrates, Milton, Bacon, and such like stock subjects. It will be refreshing to hear the life and labors of one.....who has benefitted his countrymen by works of practical usefulness and by leaving behind a good example, a noble ideal, which all may try to imitate if they cannot thoroughly realize." Accordingly, Kailaschandra delivered a lecture on the life of Ramgopal Ghose in Hooghly College in February 1st. Later on, the lecture was printed in a book form and was highly praised by the Press. According to the Bengalee paper, "Somprokash" of 1274 B.S. in its issue of 13th. Falgun, the proceeds of the sale of the book went to Ramgopal Ghose memorial fund.

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In 1869, he became one of the members to reorganize the old Oriental Seminary which was the nursery of many of the celebrities of Bengal. He had great passion for the spread of education amongst his fellow-countrymen. In the memorial meeting of his close friend from his early youth and associate, the famous journalist Girishchandra Ghose, the lecture delivered by Kailaschandra throws a side-light on the cultural development of the country of the time.[57] Addressing the president Raja Kalikrishna and others, he said among other things the following: "It is impossible to gauge the deep meaning that underlies the phenomenon that in this meeting, the assemblage of the titled Rajahs and Maharajahs to the lowest paid clerks, all sections of the society connote. This clearly manifests that the Hindu society is no longer polluted with sectarian narrowness, caste pride, pride of wealth and family; all are bound by affection of brotherliness to all. It gladdens us that the pride of aristocracy has decreased so much. It is a hopeful and gladdening sign of present-day. It is surely the effect of that education which levels down the difference between the rich and the poor. Again, I say that, this meeting is an evidence of social and moral advancement of our country." Kailaschandra Basu died on 18th August 1878. Further, his biographer says that, he used to maintain many poor students in their quest for education. Kristodas Pal, the editor of the "Hindoo Patriot" wrote once that, "In the early years of his life, he (Koylas Chandra) acquired the deserving reputation of being one of the sweetest and most fluent public speakers of the time."[58]

The biographer of the sketchy-life of Kailaschandra Basu tells us an interesting story regarding two young lads for whom he had great affection. One was his nephew, Bepinbehary Basu, the eldest son of his younger brother. He was well-educated at St. Xavier's College and became an official in the India Government Secretariat. Lastly, he became the Personal Assistant to

57. Vide Manmathanath Ghose: "Life of Girishchandra Ghose". The lecture is published verbatim in this book.

58. Quoted by M. N. Ghose Op. cit., p. 73. Kailas was the mentor of Kristodas in his early youth when he was struggling to be a journalist.

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the Governor of Eastern Nepal where he met with an untimely death. The other one was the grand-son of his youngest paternal-uncle. The lad was named Narendranath Datta. He predicted the future name and fame of both of these nephews of his. It was fulfilled in the case of latter one.[59]

Another side-light of the cultural aspect of the period that is connected with the name of Kailaschandra Basu, was his remark on Bengalee Literature made in the course of a debate in the Bethune Society. Sri Manmothanath Ghose in his life of Rangalal Bandopadhyaya, the great patriot-poet of Bengal of the middle of nineteenth century, narrates the following:[60] In 1852, 8th April, Harachandra Datta read a paper on 'Bengalee poesy'. In his paper he has shown the degraded condition of Bengalee poesy. He said, "All their writings and more specially their *panchalis* or songs, are interlarded with thoughts and expressions grossly indecent." This paper was later on published in "Calcutta Review" of January, 1853. The lecture with its pungent criticism on the Bengalee poetic literature, evoked heated discussion amongst the members. Kailaschandra, steeped in English literature, remarked about the inferiority of Bengalee literature. According to him, there is nothing in Bengalee poetic literature that can please a person of learning and refined taste. It is full of indecency and bad taste and it cannot but disgust gentle cultured people. Then he recited some poetic stanzas from "Vidyasundar" (written in the latter part of the eighteenth century) and translated them for the audience. The remarks of Kailaschandra created reaction in the minds of the admirers of Bengalee poetic literature. Some one got up to give a sharp counter-rejoinder to it. But the president stopped further discussion of it as it was already 11 P. M. What a change has taken place in Bengalee Literature since then!

In Rangalal's own words we find an echo of this debate. In

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59. During the writer's trial for sedition in 1907 as the editor of the "Yugantar", it was Kailaschandra Basu's sister's son Charuchandra Mitra who stood as one of the sureties for bail-bond for Rs. 5000 at the Police Court. The other surety was Dr. Prankrishna Acharya who stood for similar amount.

60. M. N. Ghose: "Rangalal", pp. 107-8 (in Bengalee).

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his preface to the poetical works called "Padmini Upakshayana" he has alluded to the above-mentioned debate. He says, "In the month of Baisakh, 1259 B.S. in a regular meeting of the Beaton (Bethune) Society, some member showed the inferiority of Bengalee poesy. Some even boldly asserted that the Bengalees did not produce a genuine poet as they are in political bondage for a very long time. Really, without independence free display of mind is not possible, hence no real poet can rise in the midst of an oppressed nationality. On this account, as an answer to this charge, he wrote the above-mentioned poetical work."[61] The poetical work in allusion here, refers to the story of the fight between Alaudin-Khilliji and Rana Bhim Singh of Chitor for the Queen Padmini. Rangalal has culled out the story from Tod's Rajasthan. But long ago, about the time of Aurangzeb's reign the Bengalee poet Syed Alaol, a minister of the king of Arakan, translated M. Jaisi's Hindi poetical book called "Padmavat". But that was an allegorical book expressing Sufi religious practice. Some modern critics say that the allegory was the original fiction, which the bards of Chitor gave a historical semblance in latter-days. Any way, the book of Rangalal was an original composition of his. It was a poetical nationalist propaganda book, pure and simple like Bankimchandra's "Anandamath".

Since the publication of this work, passages from this poem used to be selected in the Bengalee text-books for the lower grades by the university. The piece narrating the clarion-call to the Rajput soldiers by Bhim Singh: "Who wants to live without independence! Who will wear the chain of slavery on his feet! To be a slave for a crore of years is like living in Hell. Independence for one day even is to enjoy heavenly bliss" used to be put in the text-books. For a few generations, the lads of Bengal were inspired by this spirited poetry. The biographer says, that Rangalal's "Padmini Upakshayana" influenced the latter-day Bengal poets like Michael Madhusudan Datta, Hemchandra Bandopadhyaya, etc.

Without detracting the exuberant praise that the sympathetic

61. Ibid., Op. cit., pp. 150-152.

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reviewers made on this epoch-making poetical work, we must say that the criticism alluded to by the poet himself remains unanswered. We, of the succeeding generations were fed with the stirring poetical appeals of our nationalist poets. But, nowhere, have they alluded to British domination over the Indians and its effect. They chose episodes from the past history: the fight between the Mohammedans who were foreign Turks and the indigenous Indians whom the foreigners called "Hindus". In that stage of socio-political evolution, our poets did not have the spirit to speak outright against British oppression. This created a bad-blood between the Hindus and the Mohammedans in latter days. Our criticism is that defeatist mentality is expressed in these patriotic poesies. The poetry of the period does not express the healthy mind of a free nation. In this digression of ours, we are trying to understand the social psychology of the period. This will throw light on the mental make up of the Indian intelligentsia of the time.

Two things are discernible in what we have culled out from the lives of Kailaschandra and Rangalal. The nascent bourgeoisie of Bengal was not in the same socio-economic plane as in the time of Rammohan Roy and Devendranath Tagore. The bourgeoisie is widening its circle all the time. The far-seeing rulers are absorbing the intelligentsia in its administrative system. Not many intellectuals were left outside it. There was no "disaffected graduate" in those days. Hence, the call of the struggle of "First war of Independence" fell flat in Bengal, Bombay and in Madras side. Firstly, the bourgeoisie *paripassu* its socio-economic improvement is getting solidified. It is developing the traits of Bourgeois-democracy as the feudal distinctions are weaning away in public life. Secondly, it is becoming aggressive in its tone. Hence, beginning with Rangalal we find songs of freedom being sung by them. But strangely, all these singers and dreamers of freedom were in the service of the alien Government! The bourgeoisie was not yet politically conscious, and the Government was not yet conscious of its imperial role. The Government allowed these poesies to be written, sung and read till it understood the real import in the days of the partition of Bengal and the Revolutionary Movement.

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This was the social and cultural environment of Bengal Bourgeoisie about the time of the birth of Narendranath.

The writer's parents had four sons and six daughters. The first child was a son. It was said that he was a very hansome and fair-looking child who resembled much his grand-father. It was further said, that he had according to the rules of palmistry (*samudrika*), marks of greatness on his forehead. But the child died when eight months old. Thus the reading of palmistry of the child was falsified. The next child was a daughter who died at the age of two years and a half. Then another daughter was born who was named Haramoni (the lost one). Then another daughter named Swarnamayi. Then Narendranath, after him another daughter who died after two years or so. Then two daughters Kiranbala and Jogendrabala. They were followed by a son named Mahendranath. Lastly in 1880, Saturday September 4, (Janmastami night) was born the present-writer Bhupendranath.

Now, to close the family pedigree of Swami Vivekananda which remains incomplete if something at least is not spoken about the branch line.[62] Kaliprasad had two sons Kedarnath and Taraknath. The former worked in Government office. He left three sons and two daughters. The eldest son was Amritalal (alias Habu Babu), the second was Surendranath (alias Tamu Babu). Both of them were famous players in musical instruments. At one time the musical tunes given by Habu Babu to songs, became current in theatres and elsewhere. The song which was sung at the time of Swami Vivekananda's reception at the Sealdah Station when he returned from America, was composed by the famous dramatist Girishchandra Ghose and tuned by Habu Babu. Amritalal became a disciple of Ramakrishna. Sarat-chandra the youngest son of Kedarnath died at the age of sixteen.

Taraknath passed his B.A. examination from the Calcutta University. Then for some time he was a professor of Mathematics in the Engineering College which was then held in

62. The whole family pedigree and the names of the relatives are given by the writer in "Vivekananda Lahari" of Swami Shyamananda (in Bengalee).

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DR. BHUPENDRANATH DATTA
Athens, 1915

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the premises of the Presidency College . Then passing the B.L. examination he became a pleader (vakil) of the Calcutta High Court. He had six daughters. It should be mentioned here *enpassant* that the women-folk of our family were not unlettered. They used to compose poems. Our mother used to compose verses in Bengalee. She knew some English. She read several books in English language. All of our brothers learnt Pearycharan Sarkar's "First Book of Reading" from her. One of our cousin-sisters Mrs. Priyambada Basu composed poems which used to be published in monthly magazines. The women-folk of our family read all the current literature of the time. My mother even in her elderly age used to recite a couplet written by one of the Tagore family: "Dharte jatha martey bir, Som ar Rabi (where in the earth dwell Som—Somen Tagore, and Rabi—Rabindra Tagore), sei deva niketaney bas kare Kabi" (the poet dwells in that abode of the gods). The poem was composed by late Jyotirindranath Tagore. The ladies of our household used to send handiworks to "Hindu Mahamela". When Youbert's Exhibition was held in Calcutta in 1880 A.D. our youngest sister Jogendrabala sent a garland of beads at the Exhibition and got a medal for it. She used to learn English from Miss Kamini Seal, the Principal of the Bethune College. Mrs. Macdonald, the wife of Prof. Macdonald used to come to teach her as well. Our first two sisters studied in the school department of the Bethune College; the latter two sisters in the Mission School at Rambagan. In those days there were no schools run by the Hindus themselves for their girls. All the family history is cited to show that our family, as early as in the middle and the latter part of nineteenth century, was free from current social prejudices and priestly superstitious influence.

Further, as the family-feud of Narendranath has been mentioned in every life of "Swami Vivekananda", the matter must be cleared here. Bhubaneshwari Devi bought a share of the undivided ancestral house in her name when living conjointly with Kaliprasad's family. But after the demise of the uncle, the aunt forcibly ejected the family of Bisvanath from the house. Then her relatives acting as touts induced her to file a suit against Bhubaneshwari Devi. This led to the feud. But the aunt, Gyano-

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dasundari Devi lost the suit both in the original and in the appelate sides. She was swindled by everybody. Taraknath left a large amount of property in cash and in kind. This huge amount of property made his wife a fit person for exploitation. The touts profited by the case, while she died a pauper at the end. In the fag-end of her life, she was helped with a lumpsum cash money by Swami Vivekananda to whom she applied for succour. In her last days, she used to confess to our elder sister and others that she was goaded to the case by her eldest daughter and mother-in-law—the same aunt who nursed Bisvanath as her own son! The case created a sensation in the Court and in public. Those who were in the know of things used to illustrate the case, that how a rich widow could be exploited and swindled by others for their sordid game. Surendranath (Tamu Babu) once told the present-writer, that he enquired from our family clerk (*sarkar*) regarding the amount of money that he made out of this suit. He answered, I got Rs. 5,000! Thus, the curtain on the sordid game is dropped here.

Then, one thing must be narrated here, regarding our relation with Dr. Ramchandra Datta, the great house-holder devotee of Ramakrishna. Our maternal grand-mother Raghumani Devi belonged to the Ghose family of Beadon Street. She was born Circa. 1825 A.D. and died 24th July, 1911. Her father, Gopal-chandra Ghose married Raimoni Devi the eldest daughter of Kunjabehari Datta of Narikeldanga, whose original home was "Dvarhata" a village in the district of Howrah. He belonged to Varadvaja Gotra. He was the manager of the state of famous Gokulchandra Mitra, the proprietor of the celebrated Madan-mohon temple. Gokulchandra regarded Kunjabehari as his adopted (*palita*) son, and before his death divided his estate among his sons and Kunjabehari on equal portion. But Kunja-behari was a spirited man; he said, "I won't touch the gift of others. I will eat my own earning". Saying this, he endorsed his share of the property in the name of the idol Madanmohan. This is the tradition in our family. Kunjabehari's grand-daughter

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63. The Dvarhata Dattas are old settlers in this locality. Vide "Kayastha Kaustava", p. 67.

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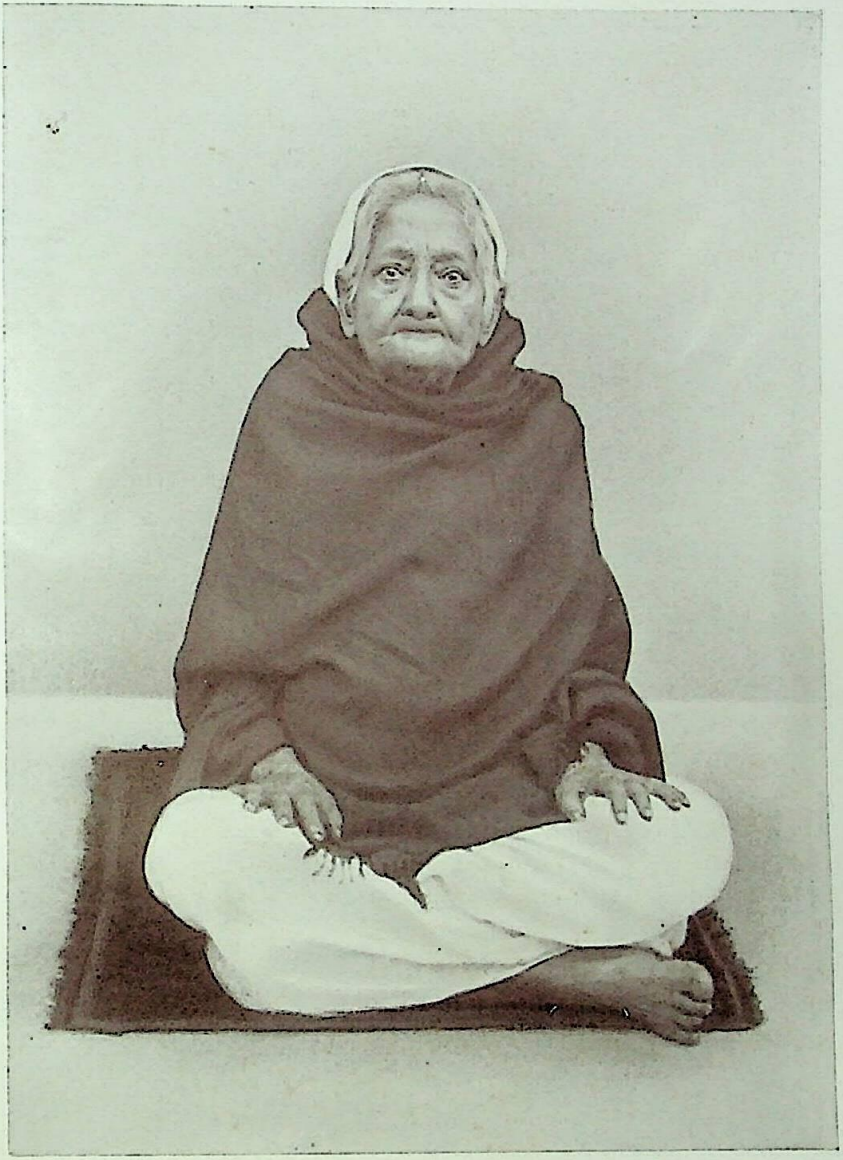

RAGHUMANI DEVI

**The maternal grand-mother of Swami Vivekananda**

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was our maternal grand-mother. Later on, Nrisinghaprasad, the son of Kunjabehari lost his paternal house in lieu of debt. He and his second son, Ramchandra came to dwell with our family. He got his education from our house. Later on, he passed his medical examination as a Vernacular Licentiate, and entered the Government service. After marrying, he used to reside in our maternal grand-mother's house No. 7, Ramtanu Bose's Lane. There Ramakrishna used to come often. In a portion of this house, once lived the Brahmo saint, Sadhu Aghornath. Keshabchandra Sen came to that house to inspect the premises for Aghornath.

Still later, Ramchandra Datta built himself a house at Madhu Roy Lane where Ramakrishna used to come and join in the Kirtana. The writer remembers one of these Kirtanas. He was then a young boy of four or five years of age, when Ramakrishna came to Ramchandra's house. The writer remembers only this much that he saw from the veranda of the first floor. He saw a man standing was playing on the *Khol* and another person wearing a coat on his body, was dancing along with the sound of the musical instrument. The writer did not remember any further. Later on, the writer was informed by his mother that he got an attack of diarrhœa and retching. The mother returned at once to her house. Thus, Dr. Ramchandra Datta was the maternal cousin of our maternal grand-mother. Hence, we used to call him "Dada" (elder brother). Thus the description of our family pedigree and the social background is at an end. But a few points should be noted down here as reminiscences of the age that has faded out of India long ago. India is changing fast at a revolutionary pace. Hence, a few memories culled out of the forgotten past of latter part of eighteenth century and the beginning of nineteenth century will be of interest to the future historian.

Our maternal grand-mother's father, Gopalchandra Ghose having separated himself from the parental roof, bought a house in Dholipara. A part of the building belonged to a mohammedan gentleman. The courtyard was contiguous. The only proprietary demarcation between the both premises was the partition wall made of flower-hedge on the midst of the common courtyard.

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Both the neighbors were friendly and sociable to each other. In the time of some religious or social festival, one had to invite the other, send cooked foods, sweetmeats, etc. One had to receive the gifts whether he eats them or not. Thus there were social amenities between the Hindus and the Moslems in those days. Again, in the maternal grand-father's house of our grand-mother Raghumani Devi at Narikeldanga, the physician of the family was a moslem Hakim of Pathan extraction. Our grand-mother was full of praise for the Hakim Saheb whose drugs worked wonders. It seemed, that there was no *purdah* (seclusion) for him in the family. Further, our grand-mother and her mother had voracious reading habits. The writer in his younger days had to provide the former constantly with the books of Basumati publication. Of course, she read only religious books. But a book she must read before taking her mid-day siesta. And even in her last days she read the books without the help of eye-glasses! But she and her mother could not write. Yet she told us, that in her childhood she used to attend the *Patsala* of a Gurumahasay at Narikeldanga. Perhaps the lack of practice brought this deficiency in her life.

Raghumani Devi was well acquainted with *Pauranic* stories. The stories of *Srimadbhagevata* were well-known to her. Though married in a Sakta family, she was of Vaishnavite temperament. This she imbibed from her maternal grand-father Kunjabehari Datta who was a great Vaishnava. He had disciples including Brahmans at Narikeldanga.

Raghumani Devi nursed the motherless Ramchandra. Ramchandra had an attack of whooping-cough while he was four years old. He was nearly dead, and according to the age-long custom was laid on the floor. Raghumani was weeping, and in that state fell asleep. She dreamt that Kunjabehari Datta accompanied by his Guru, had come. She cried out, "Grandpa, your grand-son is dying". He answered, "For that reason I have come, take this medicine and give it to him rubbing it with honey". Then she woke up, and fetched the drug which the disembodied spirit of his grand-father suggested her and she gave it to Ramchandra who got cured. It was nothing but the red seed of *rudraksha*, from which the rudraksha-bead is made. All along her life she

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had used it. About one-fourth of the seed she used to rub with honey on a stone, and the semi-liquid preparation used to be given to the boys affected with *ghoongri balsa* (whooping-cough). The writer has seen it done with his own eyes. Now, we leave the matter to the psychologist for the explanation of the dream, and to the medical research-worker for the efficacy of the drug.

Another thing about her that she was very spooky. When we transferred ourselves to her house at 7, Ramtanu Bose's Lane, she, in order to lull us to sleep or to keep us quiet, used to narrate the Pauranic stories of the *rakshashas, daityas,* goblins, etc. Then, she used to narrate to us the stories of *Putana rakshashi, Agasur, Bagasur* and what not. Further she repeated the story that a *Brahmadaitya* in Kailas Basu's house kicked her down-stairs for obstructing the door-way to the family-deity room in the evening. Unorthodox Kailas said, "Auntie has got hysteria!" At last a sorcerer came who made the *Brahmadaitya* to confess about the kicking, etc. Finally, when the mother of Kailas with folded hands asked pardon of her sister-in-law's act of commission, the spirit left Raghumani and she regained senses. Again, a witch at Narikeldanga bewitched ("ate her", in Bengalee) her; finally a sorcerer (*roja*) was brought who drove away the witch (*daini*) out of her body. And this witch was a neighboring milk-maid! One thing about our grand-mother that must be repeated here: She was Vaishnava at heart due to her early training. An incident illustrates it. In 1896, Mr. Goodwin the English disciple of Swamiji came to Calcutta along with him. At that time, Goodwin came to our place at 7, Ramtanu Bose's Lane to visit Swamiji's mother and grand-mother. Goodwin touched the feet of our grand-mother in Hindu style. But the touch of a *Mlecha* was polluting to an orthodox Hindu lady. She took a bath to clean herself of the pollution! But two consecutive baths in a wintry day was too much for the old lady. She got a severe attack of cold and suffered for some-time. This led her to repent for the act and she said, "I have committed sin for making *himsa* on Goodwin. He is a vegetarian and takes bath in the Ganges every day. He is a good Vaishnava. This is my punishment for the transgression!" Thus, the spirit of Vaishnava dictum: "A Chandala devoted to

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Hari is greater than a Brahman" is manifest in her repentance. Again, her later attitude towards Goodwin was as described in *Narada Bhakti Sutras*: "In them there is no distinction based on caste or culture, beauty or birth, wealth or profession, and the like".[64]

Again, in our early days, we used to see that during the death of a person in a family, both the men and the women would congregate and relate where and what kinds of ghosts they have seen. Our mother, only narrated two ghost stories as her personal experiences. Of course, these were optical illusions. From those ghost stories, it seemed, as if Bengal in old days was mostly peopled by unearthly creatures. People were mortally afraid of them. The people had belief in spooks, auguries of the birds and monkeys and in sooth-sayers. Those "creepy things that paralyze the brain" as said by Swamiji, took the place of religion. Even today, it is not very different! Truly, a Bengalee novelist has characterized Hinduism as consisting of: "Calendar (panji), Purohita (priest) and Padi aunt". Surely, "Padi aunt" in old days was the nursery of hobgoblin stories. And she had extreme notions about purity and untouchability which determined the house-hold. Thus frankly said, Hinduism is only a bundle of beliefs in to-day's meaningless pre-historic totemistic notions, auguries and divinations. But, it must be said, that in the case of our sisters and the subsequent generation, spooky stories ceased to circulate. In modern generation, they are unknown. Of course, many persons believe in spirit. It is the vested interest of some to keep up the belief. But the old uncanny stories have ceased to exist, thanks to modern literature. It is clear that our Pauranic stories and the deleterious aftermath of Tantricism, were responsible for the unearthly stories of goblins and the emasculation of the people. It is no wonder that the people of Bengal are denounced by the foreigners as unwarlike people. The mothers are the makers of a nation. But if the mothers demoralize their children from their child-hood, then how a healthy and vigorous race can evolve.

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64. "Narada Bhakti Sutras". Translated by Swami Tyagisananda, 1952.

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Another word of social import. It had been the complaint of our mother that her physical strength had not been inherited by her daughters. Indeed, our mother and grand-mother were very strong and hardy. The latter used to take bath in the Ganges coming all the way from Narikeldanga to the banks of the river. She travelled either by foot or by rail the place of pilgrimages extending from Puri to Dwarka! When she was sick at the age of about 70, Kaviraj Shyamadas Vachaspati was surprised in feeling her pulse. "I have not seen such a strong pulse in a Bengalee lady of this age," he exclaimed! It is a fact worthy of notice, that the womenfolk of the middle class of Bengal are rapidly getting physically degenerated. Perhaps it is due to the lack of time-honored family duties of husking the rice, milking the cows, cooking for a large number of peoples, etc.

Another interesting fact of social importance is to be mentioned here in connection with our mother. It is a case of ladies' dress and toilet. Our mother used to say that in her young days, the elderly ladies as well as the girl daughters-in-law of the house, used to wrap their bodies only with one piece of Sari. Prof. Ghurye thinks that that has been the Rig-Vedic custom, and it is preserved in Bengal.[65] Only in winter, the daughter-in-law could wear a bodice or a jacket made of imported red broad cloth. Otherwise, the use of costume on the upper part of the body was considered improper. Of course, the mediæval Bengalee literature speaks of *canchali* (stay) and *ordna* (veil) used by rich or fashionable women, but these are not to be seen in a middle class family. In some of Dinabandhu Mitra's novel, a scandalous reference has been made about canchali. As regards toilet, the use of soap by the young daughters-in-law was a scandalous affair. The lynx-eyed "Padi aunt" would not permit any improper behavior in the family. Hence, she said, the girl daughters-in-law used soap in the evening in privacy of the privy!

In these days of rouge, paint and lip-stick and the rapid change of costume, these news are given here for the information of future research students of social history.

65. Ghurye: "Indian Costume", 1951.



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## IV

## SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

We will now talk about the social environment in the midst of which Narendranath was born and grew up as a youth. As has been said at the outset, the Bengal bourgeoisie was the product of the English East India Company. During the early days of the European East India Companies, the merchant classes amassed money through making transactions with them. There is a tradition of one "Gouri Sen" whose fabulous riches are still talked of. These businessmen formed the monied class of Calcutta and West Bengal. But the Kayasthas rose in another way. They, like their ancestors of yore, being the intelligentsia of the Hindu Community, took to East India Company's service. A few of them rose through the Company's service or through ancillary institutions established by the same.

It is a far cry from the days of the Mughal Conquest to English East India Company's rule. The Kayasthas fought along with the Pathans against the Mughals and being defeated, were pushed from their former proud position as the landlords of the country. The Mughals under Man Singh, made a fission in the Hindu society and put up the Rahri-Brahmans against the Kayasthas. Thus a class-struggle ensued in which the Kayasthas went down. There have not been a big Kayastha Zaminder in the whole of Bengal during the Mughal Period.[1] Only the Dinajpur Raj Estate being included in that time in the kingdom of Cooch Behar was saved. But with the establishment of the English rule, the Kayasthas of the surrounding areas of West Bengal adjusted themselves with it. And those who had connection with the ruling English prospered. Thus the importance of the Kayasthas in Calcutta arose. But coming

1. Vide Rajanikanta Chakravarty's "History of Bengal"; H. Sastri's writings and K. P. Banerjee's "History of Bengal under the Nawabs" (in Bengalee).

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from the surrounding places, these Kayasthas mostly belonged to the Dakshin-Rahr sept. Later on, with the spread of English education they took to English learning. If they learned Persian in the past, they become proficient in English in the present. As a result, a liberal group arose in the midst of the Bengal bourgeoisie. This group began to react to the religious and social reforms. Rammohan Roy had Kayastha associates from the very beginning. The Tattabodhini Sabha and the Brahmo Somaj had Kayasthas in leading positions. The Kayasthas contributed largely to the reform movements of the day. Again, with the onslaught of the Christian Missionaries many Kayastha youngmen reacted to it. Their lot was social ostracism. On the other hand, an attempt was made to create an ethnic change in them. That was the order of Rev. Grant Duff.[2] It worked well for long time. Many of the converts swelled the ranks of the Eurasians, now-a-days called "Anglo-Indians."

Then as a dialectical contradiction arose the Brahmo reform movement from the womb of the Hindu society. It served as a bulwark against Christian onslaught. As such, it had to be purely an intellectual movement. The late Dr. Sundarimohan Das, a leading member of the Brahmo Somaj, once told the present-writer that the whole early life of the Brahmo Somaj had been spent in fighting Christian onslaught, hence it had no time to go to the masses. But the conservative Hindu society looked askance at them. The religious reformers were not favored by the conservative section of the society. It was the liberal bourgeois youngmen who came forward to become religious reformers. But as soon as the reformers attempted to put their reforming zeal into practice i.e., in social life, persecution and ostracism became their lot. Thus they were forced to form a group of their own.

Again, the scions of many leading Kayastha families turned religious and social reformers. They were driven out of the conservative society. Formerly, the educated youngmen of the

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2. Rev. Bhai A. L. Basu of Navabidhan Brahmo Samaj told the writer about it.

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middle class used to frequent the Brahmo Somaj of Debendranath Tagore, but there was no social bar in joining it. At this time, Maharshi Debendra started a Brahmo School for the young boys and girls at Simulia, in order to counteract the missionary influence. The school used to hold its classes in the capacious *Puja-dalan* of the Datta family. Also, a life-like oil-painting picture of the Maharshi used to be hung on the school wall. But the young cousin of Kaliprasad, Gopalchandra Datta, becoming temporarily insane, returned the same picture back to the Tagores. Later on, the neighbors threatened Kaliprasad of ostracism from the caste for harboring a *Pirali* in his house. It is noteworthy that the threat was made not for harboring a Brahmo school, but for giving shelter to the school of a Pirali Brahman. Now, the Piralis are ostracised Brahmans. Hence, their contact in any form cannot be tolerated. Later on, when the present-writer met Maharshi Debendranath and was introduced by Pandit Priyanath Sastri, he exclaimed: "I know all men of your family. What relation did Gopalchandra Datta and Taraknath Datta bear to you? Gopalchandra was a devoted Brahmo, Taraknath was the lawyer of our estate". The writer was astonished that the old man of eighty still had a sharp memory. Thus, he came to know three generations of the Datta family.

Then came the question of the journey of the Hindus across the "Kalapani" (black water). Formerly, any Hindu who crossed the ocean used to be ostracized as it was prohibited in the Shastras. But late Pandit Satyabrata Samasrami has said that he could not find any word of interdiction in any authoritative book save the recent "Saurya-Purana".[3] The thing is this: The Arab migration, being checked in the West, began to flow towards the East.[4] They began to plunder on high way the Indian ships manned by the Hindus. This probably led to recent interdiction against sea-voyage. As a result, the Indian Colonies of East Africa, Indonesia, Champa and Kambujia were lost to India.

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3. Vide S. Samasrami in his Bengalee magazine called the "Pandit".
4. Felix von Luschan: "Rassen, Sprachen Und Voelker".

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But the conservative society knew nothing of history. Their dictum was: old time-honored customs must be preserved. But Rammohan Roy broke the ban and led the way; others began to follow the suit. But those who came back with outlandish habits used to be ostracized from the society. At last a religious sanction was procured that it is not a sin to go to foreign country for education. Yet the stigma was there. Further, many of these youngmen came back with foreign wives. All these outlandish ways of life created a consternation in the conservative society. The society was non-plussed and did not know what to do for its self-preservation. The conservative society was struggling for its very existence. The liberal section of the bourgeoisie was defiant to the old world-view and mode of life. In this situation, Narendranath was born in a liberal bourgeois family.

The great German philosopher Kant has said, "If you want to understand a man, then you must understand his environment." For this reason, we are talking of the environment in which Narendranath Datta, later on known as Swami Vivekananda, took his birth. He was born in a society which has borne the storm and stress of all agitations since the starting of religious reform movement down to the revolutionary attempt of latter days. It is no wonder that this storm and stress will be reflected in his life. He was born when Hindu Society was again on the road to regain its dynamism. In his own Kayastha Community the blow fell terribly. Parents and sons,[5] husbands and wives used to be separated because the son either has changed his religion or has become a reformer or has gone to England for study. This blow fell even among Narendranath's relative circle. Kalinath Ghosh, the nephew of his maternal grand-father by his sister, became a Christian at the age of fourteen, and since then he was not heard of. The only child of Ramtanu Basu's widowed third daughter, Tarinikumar Mitra was converted to Christianity by Rev. K. M.

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5. Vide B. C. Pal's case in his autobiography. The late Prof. P. K. Ray told the writer, "what could we do, we were young boys of seventeen and were driven out of our homes by our parents". He used to call himself a "Hindu revolutionist".

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Banerjea at the age of fourteen, and terrible was the pathetic condition of his mother which was a life-long tragedy to her. An illustration of the gulf that was created by the change of religion is narrated here: The late Gobindachandra Datta of Rambagan Datta family, got a highly remunerated post at Bombay. But he had to join his post by making a sea-voyage round the Cape Comorin as there was no rail-road joining the two cities at that time. After his return, he was ostracized for crossing the "black water!" He was defiant and became a Christian. This was the tradition in our family that the writer has heard. But that was a terrible blow to good many related families. Gobindachandra Datta later on went to England with his family. There his eldest daughter Srimati Taru Dutt and the younger Srimati Aru Dutt became famous as poets in English language and were commended by the Poet-Laureate Edmund Gosse.

Three years later, Gobindachandra returned home. His wife, Srimati Kshetramani Devi was the uterine sister of our elder aunt, the wife of Kedarnath. Our elder sister Swarnamayi used to narrate that the aunt took her young daughter and her to visit Kshetramani Devi. She was eating then; after finishing her meal she asked both the cousins to eat the remainder of the food that was in the plate. Both the cousins helped themselves of the food. The aunt did not say a word at that time. But coming back home she beat the two girls mercilessly who were only six years old for eating at the plate of Kshetramani. Swarnamayi used to narrate to us, that before aunt Kshetramani's visit to England, she had eaten out of her plate and did the very same thing after her return; hence she could not understand where the fault lay. But she did not realize that Kshetramani by changing her religion has changed herself ethnically. She no longer belonged to the Hindu society and race! At the end, she joined the order of "Plymouth Brethren" and bequeathed all her property to the Christian Church. But years later, this Christian lady known to the public as "Mrs. Gobinda Dutt" helped her sister's two sons Amritalal and Surendranath when they were separated from the family by their paternal aunt, Taraknath's wife. She maintained them all

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along the rest of her life. Again, during her dying days she requested Swami Vivekananda to visit her. Swamiji visited his aunt (we all called her "aunt" on account of the relationship with our paternal aunt). It is a question, whether the responsibility lies with the Hindus or not, for driving the renegades from their religion away and make them strangers. The son of the aforesaid Tarini Mitra was ordered by his father's cousin not to visit them any longer since his grand-mother has died. And he did not come any further to visit his father's Hindu relatives.

Thus, the community in which Narendranath was born was in turmoil. Later on, dialectical contradictions set in. People became defiant of the conservative prohibition. Young Bengal openly revolted as we have noticed beforehand. Our *gosthi-pati*[6] (head of the society) was the multimillionaire Ashutosh Dev (Chatu Babu). It is said that six hundred families moved in unison under him in social matters. At the time of his father, Ramdulal Sarker, who amassed millions by banianship, a scion of one of the old and rich families was going to be ostracized for his un-Hindu life. But Ramdulal Sarker was the guardian of this nobleman, hence he proudly said to the detractors: "What do you talk of caste, it is in my lock and key." This signifies that caste rigor and prohibitions are meant for the poor men only!

Then another young nobleman named Kaliprasanna Sinha started a novel method of showing defiance. He engaged lots of Brahman Pandits to translate the Mahabharata into Bengalee. Naturally, these Pandits used to have *Sikhas* (tufts of hair on the occiput) on their heads. Suddenly, a Pandit would find that his sikha, the badge of Brahmanical piety is cut off from behind by somebody. Of course, he would go to Kaliprasanna the hirer for making complaint. At last the aggrieved Pandit would be mollified by the payment of cash according to the size of the sikha! Afterwards, these cut-off pig-tails used to be hung against the walls tagged with the label stating the price! In this

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6. Vide N. N. Vasu: "Dakshin-rahriya Kayastha Kanda".

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way, Young Bengal began to react to conservatism. The mentality and the struggle of the period is reflected in Michael Madhusudan Datta's two dramas written in Bengalee. The one is called "Buro Saliker ghare ron" (Hair on the nape of an old *salik* bird). It describes a landlord outwardly extreme orthodox in belief and conservative in heart. Yet, for personal pleasure is secretly ready to forego his orthodoxy. The second one is called, "Ekai Ki Baley Savyata" (Is this civilization)? It describes the heterodox untrammelled life of young Bengal youth. Another illustration is contained in Rajnarain Basu's book, "That age and this age." (Ekal-o-Sekal) in Bengalee. But later, when sons of good many well-to-do families began to visit Europe for education, the persecution quieted down a good deal. The dialectical contradiction forced the society to readmit those who have gone astray. Thus, a youngman of Kayastha origin who had a European wife and two children by her, was readmitted in the orthodox fold by divorcing his wife. The late Pandit Jivananda Vidyasagar gave the *Vavasthya* (sanction) for it. Thus, this is the social *milieu* in which Narendranath was born and spent the early part of his life. He was born when his community has made tremendous sacrifices to get out of the thraldom of priestcraft on the one hand, and youngmen are aspiring of higher status in political field on the other.

Narendranath had the advantage of being born in a house where from Maharshi Debendranath down to all the notables of the time have visited on some occasion or other. The great poet Iswarchandra Gupta used to visit our house very often. His grandfather's cousin Gopalchandra was a prominent member of the Bethune Society and one time a disciple of Maharshi Debendranath. His uncle Taraknath was a member of the Brahmo Somaj and along with Umanath Gupta became its Joint Secretary; but he walked out with Keshabchandra and others in protest to Debendranath's conservatism. He was also a member of "Bamabodhini Sabha," a society for the advancement of women. He died in 1886. Then the eldest cousin of the mother of Narendranath, Kailaschandra Basu was a rationalist and the permanent Secretary of Bethune Society till his death. Again, the European Missionary ladies used to come to

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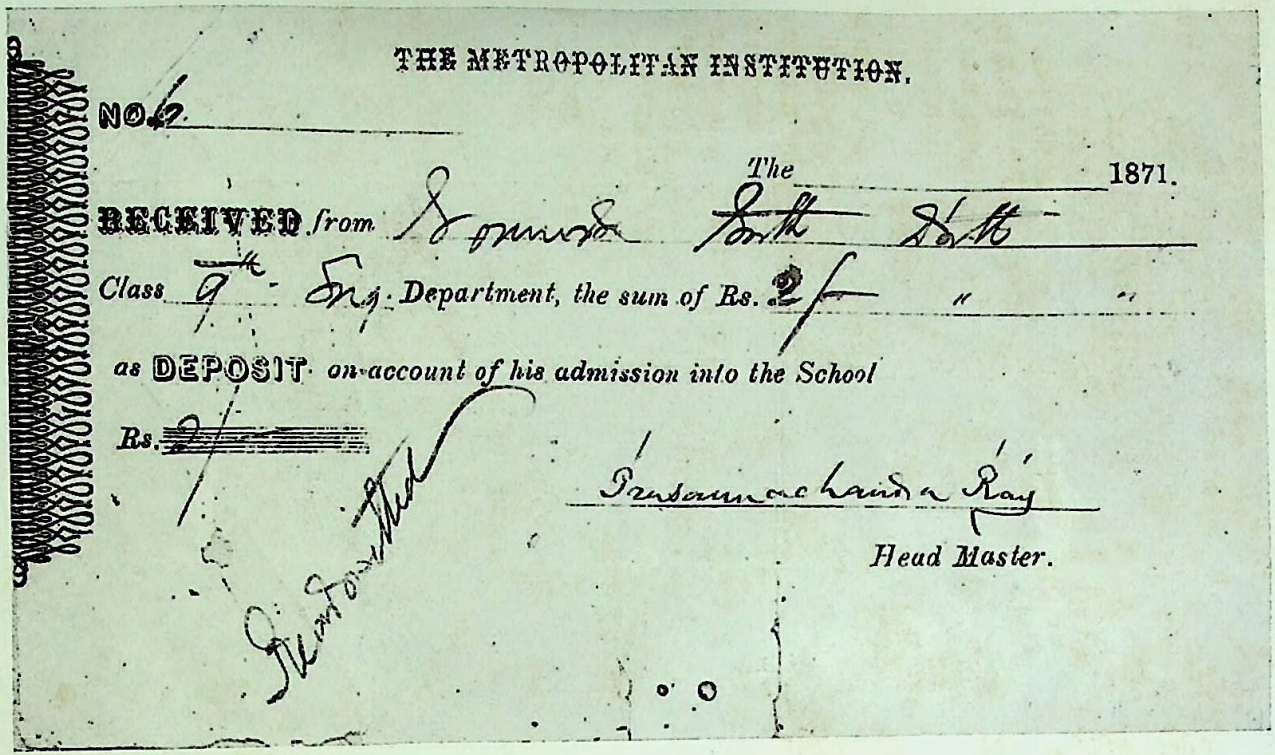

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Head Master.

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the house of the Dattas to instruct the ladies of the family. Thus, there was a liberal atmosphere in which Narendranath was born.

As it is not a biography of Swamiji, only a few salient facts are to be told here. As it is mentioned, Narendranath was readmitted to the Metropolitan Institution in 1871 A.D. He spent a year and a half with the family at Raipur (C. P.). Coming back to Calcutta with the family, he re-entered the said school and passed his Entrance Examination in the first division in 1879. Then he joined the Presidency College in 1880. As his college was a governmental one and the professors were all or mostly Europeans, it was incumbent on all the students to attend the college either in European suit or in Indian chapkan and trowsers, and with a wrist-watch on the hand. It was the mode *de rigueur* in the Presidency College. He used to attend the college by dressing in alpaca chapkan, trowsers and with a swiss-made wrist-watch on hand (the chapkan and the wrist-watch have been deposited at the Belur Math). But as he contracted malarial fever in the Second Year, his percentage of class attendance fell short. He was not allowed to appear in the F.A. Examination. The General Assembly's Institution accepted him and sent him up for final examination. During this time when Narendranath was not allowed to appear in the examination he broached the subject of going to England to study for the Bar. But father did not accede to the proposal at the time as he said, he could not live by being separated from Narendranath. In 1881 he passed his First Examination in Arts and continued to study further at the same Institution. There, Narendranath contracted friendship with Sri Brajendranath Seal, the later famous savant of international reputation. Brajendranath was his senior. But they used to meet at a philosophical club and discussed about philosophy.[7] In 1883 Narendranath passed his B.A. Examination. Then he took admission in the Law Department of the Metropolitan Institution (now Vidyasagar College) in 1884 to prepare for the B.L. Examination. He completed his law studies in 1886, but did not appear at the examination

7. Prof. Seal told these things to the writer.

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the cause of which is mentioned later on. At the time of Narendranath's college career Herbert Spencer's "Evolution" and "unknown and unknowable" theories were the rage amoung the students. Along with it, John Stuart Mill's book "On Liberty" was favorite. The Indian middle class was copying its English counterpart in every respect. If the earlier generation was enamored of Priestley, Parker and the psychologist Hamilton, the next generation was reading Spencer, Mill, Harrison, the English protogonist of Positivism.

Narendranath was fascinated with Evolutionism of Herbert Spencer.[8] That made him part company with the social reformers, who attacked him in turn. We must say that instead of mud-throwing on each other, the reformers must have the keenness of mind to observe that mid-Victorian ideologies were evolved when England was in full bloom of her colonial imperialistic expansion. Dialectically it has come to England. That was not the absolute category of truth. Dialectically, what has evolved in one age in one country cannot hold good in another. The reformers being under the English ideological influence, retarded political advanced ideology and action. Even to the last days of Indian slavery, the reforming societies remained as the bulwark of political reaction.

Narendranath in his young days, joined the Brahmo Samaj. That was nothing unusual in those days amongst the youthful intelligentsia. He came in contact with Keshabchandra Sen and Pandit Shivnath Sastri. He became a member of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj. Perhaps the mysticism of Keshabchandra seemed too much irrational to him. He used to sing in the choir of the church. Pandit Shivnath Sastri once told the present-writer: "Your brother took me to your house and introduced me to your father." The late Haromohan Mitra used to repeatedly say to the writer, that Swamiji used to say: "But for Ramakrishna I would have been a Brahmo missionary." He was an enthusiastic Brahmo during that time. But that trait never left

8. He translated Spencer's book on "Education" in Bengalee for Gurudas Chottopadhyaya the publisher. Later on, he translated "Imitation of Christ" in Bengalee.

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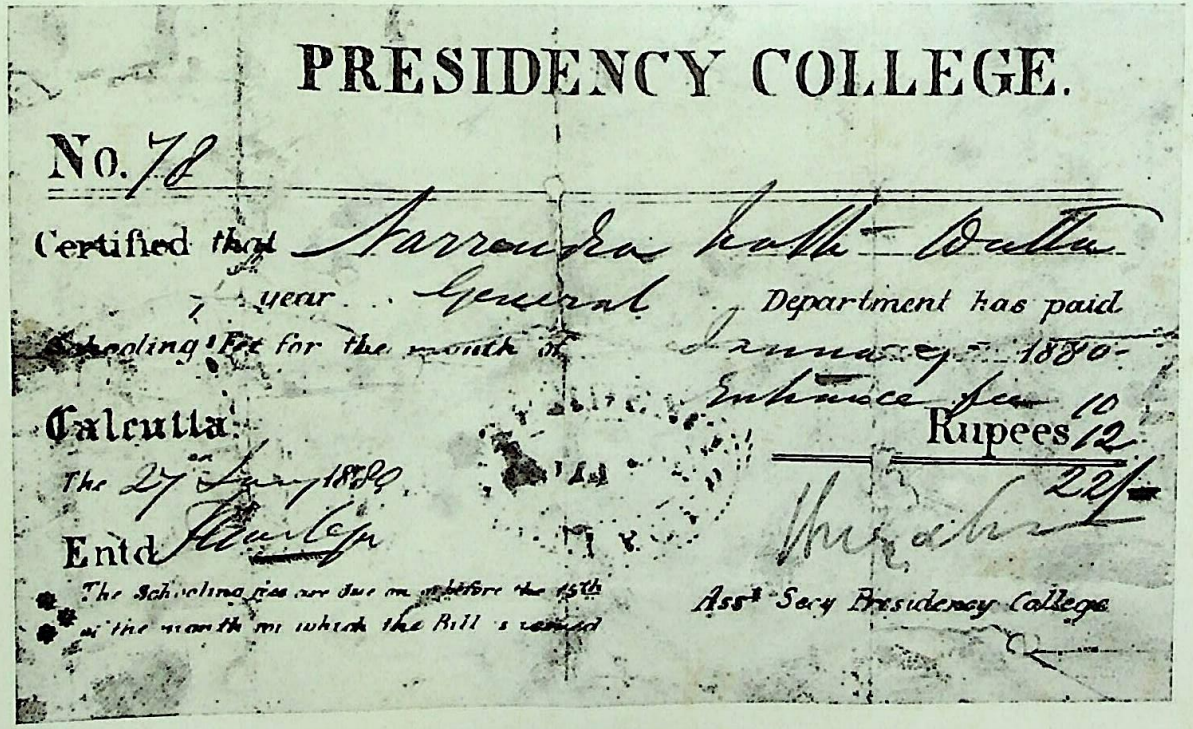

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him. Inspite of Ramakrishna and mediaeval Vedanta, from a social reformer he turned a social-revolutionary. This the reformers have failed to notice.

During his college life at the General Assembly's Institution he met Ramakrishna. Narendranath's classmate Haromohan narrated the following incident to us: "One day, our European professor was cross with the students. The students could not understand Wordsworth, the English poet. He banged the table, stamped the footstool with his boots and at last went out of the class-room. At this juncture, I was going out of the class-room for some business. But I saw Rev. Hestie, the Principal, was coming towards the class-room. I returned, and then heard Hestie's lecture. He said that Mr. so-and-so says that the boys are stupid and do not understand Wordsworth. Perhaps he himself does not understand the poet. Wordsworth used to get trance, etc. Then he concluded that such a man is living in Dakshineswar who gets trances. "You go and see him." That was the first time that the students of the class heard about Ramakrishna."

During the time when Narendranath was visiting the Brahmo Samaj, Dr. Ramchandra Datta, his relative, told him that he visits here and there, why does he not visit Ramakrishna Paramhansa. Our mother said that it was Ramchandra who brought Narendranath to Ramakrishna. The biographers of Ramakrishna say that at the house of our neighbor Sureshchandra Mitra where Ramakrishna was coming, Sureshchandra invited Narendra for singing, and thus the acquaintance began.

Narendra was an expert singer in classical music. He inherited that taste from his father who practised it for sometime in his youth. Narendranath learned music from an *Ostad* (teacher) named "Beni". The writer has heard from his mother that Kasi Ghosal was also one of his ostads. It is said that Kasi Ghosal used to play *pakhwaj*, etc., at the Adi Brahmo Samaj. Perhaps he learnt to play on the same instrument and along with it on *Bauya* and *Tabla* from him. Narendranath wrote a book on how to play on these instruments in Bengalee. It was published by Baishnavchandra Basak of Bartola. The writer has seen a copy of it in the Library of the Belur Math.

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It was the fashion in those days of political awakening to practise physical culture. Surendranath Banerjea and Anandamohan Basu were thundering from the "Students' Association" founded by them, that the young Bengalees must be aggressive and physically strong. Thus, there was an awakening in this matter. Narendranath went to Ambu Guha's *Akhara* for the exercise of *Kusti*. He was also proficient in English system of physical exercises. Many youngmen of good families used to throng the akhara of Ambu Guha. The late Swami Brahmananda told the present-writer that he used to frequent that place. He learnt how to turn a man on his back; but he gave it up after meeting Ramakrishna.

Surendranath's influence on the youngmen was immense in those days and that of Keshabchandra was waning.[9] It is also said that Narendranath used to frequent the *Hindu Mahamela* of Nabagopal Mitra. It was an organization to resurrect the Hindu life in order to make the Hindus a nation[10]. It was purely a national organization with national revival as its ideal. The ladies of our house used to send their handicraft works at the exhibition of the Mahamela. It this way, all the traits expressed in Swami Vivekananda's life had its incipiency in family characteristics and social cross-currents. To come back to Swamiji's early life, we find, that after graduation Narendranath was made by his father to enter the firm of Nemaichandra Basu, Attorney-at-Law as an articled-clerk to qualify himself for the attorneyship. The latter was a friend of his father. At the same time he studied law at the aforementioned Institution to prepare himself for B. L. Examination. Here, an interesting news is to be mentioned. We have already said that Narendranath previously showed his desire to go to England to study law. In this matter, the writer's elder brother, Mahendranath says, that Narendranath had the ambition to complete his law studies in England, and father was in agreement with this ambition. But the latter's sudden demise upset the plan. Again, to give a further lift in Narendranath's

9. Vide B. C. Pal: "Memories of My Life and Time".
10. Vide Joges Bagal's Book on the "History of Hindu Mahamela" (in Bengalee), p. 42.

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future career, his father made him enter Freemasonry as a member. On being asked by his uncle about the reason of this procedure, Narendranath's father answered that it will help him in his future life.[11] The writer has seen a piece of printed application form of Freemason's Lodge amongst the old household papers relating to Narendranath's College certificates. (This paper has been sent to Belur Math).

But after the death of Narendranath's father, he had to give up the articled-clerkship due to unexpectedly sudden family economic stringency, but continued to study law. But due to Ramakrishna's illness he stayed at Cossipur and absented himself from home for a long time. On account of this continued absence, the mother got frightened and went to Cossipur to bring him back. She took the writer who was then six years old, along with her. The mother and the boy were sent upstairs and were ushered before the ailing Ramakrishna. In the midst of the large room he was sitting on his bed but in a half-reclining posture; his back was resting on a big pillow. He looked at both of us and said to mother: "The doctor has advised me not to speak but I must speak to you. It is good that you have come. Take Naren back with you. Girish and others donned him in sanyasi's clothes. But I exclaimed,—how is that, you have a widow-mother and an infant brother to look after. It does not befit you to be a sanyasi!" Thereupon, Narendranath accompanied mother and the writer on the way back home. In the carriage mother told him what Ramakrishna has told her. But Narendranath answered: "He (Ramakrishna) tells the thief to steal but warns the householder at the same time" (A Bangalee phrase which means working both ways). On the way back home, Narendranath got down at Baghbazar as he said he had some business there.

Some time later, one morning about 8-9 o'clock the writer heard *Ramsinga* (big vaishnava bugle) cry from the Simla Street. Suddenly mother said, "Hurry up, Ram has sent carriage to take

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11. At that time it was the fashion with the Indians to become members of the Freemasonry. Lawyers, Judges and Government officials were its members. Thus, the membership gave a chance to mix with the high dignitaries and officials.

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us to his Kakurgachi garden. Ramakrishna is dead, the *Samadhi* of his bones takes place today." She did not get time enough to clothe the writer properly. With a shirt on his body he was taken to the garden. Then, after waiting for some time, the writer heard the sound of a musical procession coming towards the garden. He hastened towards the gate and stood there watching the procession coming in. As he stood near the gate, he saw some youngmen and others entering the garden singing, accompanied by stringed instruments. One of the youngmen was carrying a pitcher on his head. But the thing that struck him that though he was a boy of six years of age, yet he recognized many of the faces as known ones. He must have seen them before. Then seeing the writer, Narendranath asked whether mother has come. The writer answered in the affirmative. Still later, he saw a tall, athletic, fair-looking youngman taking a dip in the pond of the garden and after the bath, plucking a *Jaba*-flower and worshipping at the brick-built half-finished plinth. It struck him that he knew that youngman's name. It was Niranjan Ghose (later Swami Niranjanananda). Then there was feeding of the guests. After their feeding late in the day, the writer and a boy of the locality were given some *Khicheri* to eat. Of course, the quantity was not belliful! Then the writer did not remember any further of the occasion at Kakurgachi.

Now to come back to Narendranath's life. After the demise of Ramakrishna he came back home, and gave his clothes to wash. Later, he asked mother whether he has preserved the bones tied in the *Chaddar* (the covering sheet of the upper body). The mother answered that she found some charcoals tied in a corner of the Chaddar and threw them off. He said, "Alas! these were the bones of Ramakrishna."[12] At that time (1886 A.D.) the deposit money for the B. L. Examination was due. At first he thought that the time-limit for deposit has passed,

12. It seems that many disciples preserved some particles of burnt bones of Ramakrishna from the cremation place. One of them was Kali Mukherjee (Bootey Kali) who worshipped it in his own home at Calcutta. Later on, this relic was taken to his village home at Gopinathpur, Dt. Hugly.

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but later on, counting the days he exclaimed, "No, there is time yet." But that was all, he did not any further care for the law-examination. Here, it must be said that the writer heard all these from his mother when he grew older.

Then came the law-suit. After the law-suit was won, Narendranath made himself scarce in his mother's house. Finally he left for Upper India, and there was no connection with the family any farther. It is to be noted here, that up to the time he came back from the West in 1896 he was not seen in *gerua* clothes at home.

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# V

## THE REACTION

While the Reform movement was in full swing and Ramakrishna was slowly getting known to the persons interested in religion, dialectics of Historical Materialism was working its way slowly but surely. Contradiction set in the Bourgeois society. While the sledge-hammer of the reformers was making the intellectuals waver between the dilemma that whether the almighty and infinite God is to be worshipped in incorporeal form or in corporeal form in the shape of an image, there came one Pandit Sasadhar Tarkachudamani, the brain of orthodoxy of the time, to Calcutta to defend Brahmanism. He arose as the protagonist of popular Hinduism as against the onslaught of the Brahmo Samaj. But it seems that Pandit Sasadhar defended Brahmanism as expounded in the Puranas and delineated in the epigonous growth that took place during the mediaeval period. It is probable that he had no historical perspective of the development of the religious experiences of the Indo-Aryans in the course of ages. It is said that he gave a spiritual interpretation of wearing the *sikha* or tuft of hair on the occiput and such-like things. He was soon followed by Krishnaprasanna Sen latterly known as Swami Krishnananda of the *Garibdas* sect. It is evident that these revivalists were the champions of the hoary vested interests as against the petty-bourgeois reform movement. Class-conflict is discernible here.

As a result, *Hari Sabhas* were set up everywhere, in imitation of the Brahmo Samaj. They even copied the Brahmo Samaj in their mode of worship in a certain way. But it did not influence the intellectuals who remained as sceptic as ever. Swami Vivekananda has said that the propagandists did not influence the people. Those who were discussing whether the almighty God is to be conceived in anthropomorphic character or simply as a formless void which is unknown and unknowable, (*Anirbachaniya* of Vedanta) remained unimpressed by the priestly

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defence of institutions that have got their roots in Totemism or Animism of dim past.

The subject is broached here because it is the fashion now-a-days to criticise Swami Vivekananda that he strengthened the tottering belief in idolatry and objectionable social institutions and restored them to their former positions. How do these criticisms fall wide of the mark! A searching enquiry into the dialectics of Historical Materialism of the time will bear before us the true facts of the phenomena that led to reaction.

There are several books written by the late Nagendranath Chattopadhyaya, a preacher of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, which give some inkling of the controversies that raged at the time between both the groups. The charge of Pandit Sasadhar was that God cannot be worshipped devoid of anthropomorphic form. He said that how there can be any conception without perception. It is an old dispute that has raged in Christianity and Islam in bygone days. The Biblical Jehovah transformed as the Christian 'God' is an anthropomorphic expression. The Old Testament and the "Book of Revelation" of the New one testify to this conception. The early Islamic conception of Allah bears the stamp of anthropomorphic expression. Hinduism in its popular form is never devoid of it. Indeed, it is historically true that the Indo-Aryans did not develop the conception of a monotheistic God of the shemitic type. When they discarded the Vedic gods and arrived at the free-thinking attitude of mind, then Samkhya said that, "The existence of God is untenable, because it cannot be proved" (*Samkhya-Karika*). But it is postulated that if any one is devoid of misery, action, birth, mishap, etc., then it can accept such a one as the *Purusha*. But according to the Samkhya this *Purusha* which takes the place of God is not active, the *Prakiti* i.e., the nature acts and makes it work. Thus the protestant Samkhya which gives a psychological discussion first broached on the Indian soil, leaves the question of an almighty God unexplained. Rather, it speaks of environmental factor as the mainspring of creation.

Then comes the dissident Jainas and the Buddhists. These schools of thought did not talk of God. Their teachers were the ideal "Purusha". They took them as their ideals. The



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Buddhists followed *Sakya Singha* as their ideal. They put him in the place of the Purusha. When the mighty Maurya empire was established, the emperors alternated between Jainism and Buddhism in their devotion. Hence, there was no scope for a shemitic type of a despotic desert God to develop on the fertile soil and soft climate of India.

Later on, after the downfall of the Buddhist power, we find the rise of Brahmanical idol-worship during the Vakataka and the Gupta period. Perhaps this is an imitation of the Jainas and the Buddhists. Big vested interests were formed around the idols and the temples of these idols. At this juncture, the attempt of Jaimini to resuscitate Vedicism was a failure. It is said that the Brahmanical Mimamsakas were not enamoured of a God who is to be worshipped by the devotees. At this period came Vadarayana and put into aphorisms the Upanishadic conception of a *Parabrahman*. The animistic belief has given rise to Pantheism of some of the Upanishads. Pantheism took the form of Monism in the Brahma-Sutras otherwise called the Vedanta-Sutras. Thus, there was no historical scope for monotheistic conception of God. India had many mighty empires in the past, yet there was no rise of the conception of anthropomorphic personal God, the creator, in the minds of the Indo-Aryan philosophers. On the other hand, the "Cullaniddessa" says, that Brahma as the creator and preserver was worshipped at one time. But the Upanishadas put down Brahma-worship by creating *a Parabrahman,* an all-pervading God.

The ignorant and uninstructed mind hankers after a God who is to be worshipped and prayers to be offered to whom for intercession in his trials and tribulations. As such, pre-Upanishadic conceptions were in existence among the minds of the people all the time. From the pre-Buddhist age, the people were worshipping the Chaityas ("Cheiya" in Jaina Amgas) and the *Ficus Religiosa* (Asvatta tree) and local village deities. Then came the gorgeous worship of the idols in the temples. The *Cullaniddesa,* supposed to be the saying of the Buddha, gives illustrations of various kinds of worship that were prevalent at the time. The worship of the Guru or the leader of the sects was in practice even in those remote times. The worship of

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apotheosized persons are noted in the text as well. Thus a vested interest was created around image-worship. This could neither be eradicated nor destroyed from the minds of ignorant people. Thus when Vadarayana discusses that God is impersonal as well as personal (3.2.14-15) he had to leave a loop-hole by saying that the ignorant people should worship God through a symbol (4.1.4), though he disesteemed symbol worship. Yet, this saying became the ground of justification for all kinds of grotesque forms of idolatry of latter days.

Again, the Islamic conquest necessitated the worship of a personal God Who accedes to the prayers of His devotees. Beside it, Bengal being the land of Mahayana Buddhism, idolatry had much scope in this province. Again, Sakti worship in the shape of various forms of images was introduced by the local Rajahs in comparatively recent times. All these interests buttressed by colossal amount of ignorance, took the form of Indo-Aryan religion as sanctioned by the Veda! It is no wonder that the ignorant and deluded people were not only told that the practice of *Sati* was sanctioned in the Veda, but also the worship of Sakti, Radha and Krishna is traced from that source as well!

On this field of intellectual degeneration, supported by vested interests of exploiting groups, burst forth the reform movement of the Brahmo Samaj. But the Brahmos rejected all the litanies, liturgies, rites and ceremonies of prevalent Hinduism. Their God was a non-anthropomorphic metaphysical expression yet put up as a personal one. They imported the God of the Unitarian Church of England and America in a Vedantic garb. Naturally, they suffer from the same defects as the Unitarian Church of the West. The Hindu mind is trained in elaborate rituals and gorgeous festivals. Christianity has made up its deficiencies by the introduction of worship of the Christ-the-incarnation as the mediator. Islam made up its deficiencies by the development of Sufism as the supplement to it. But the Brahmo Samaj created a void in the mind of the Hindu used to gorgeous rites and liturgies. Here is its trouble. An introduction of philosophical disquisition about transcendental yet personal nature of Godhood, cannot satisfy the minds of common men; on this account the Mahayanists in Tibet, China and Japan have developed the

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conception of God. Similarly, the Jainas of to-day have developed the conception of Godhood though it is an undefinable one. The same is the case with some of the Vedantists to whom Brahman is a quantity that cannot be expressed (*Anirbachaniya*), hence they resort to popular Hinduism. But, the Brahmo Samaj could not give the substitutes to all the conceptions that dwell in the Hindu mind.

Keshabchandra understood the difficulty. It is said that after his meeting Ramakrishna, he changed his cult to devotional *New Dispensation.* He introduced ritualism and went to such an extreme that some of his outpourings were criticised by Max Mueller as of an "overwrought brain". In this situation came the reaction known as the "Revival of Hinduism". We must understand that revival before we throw stones at it. Dialectics of historical processes has brought it about. But, as we are always talking of Dialectics, hence we must be clear about it. For an easy understanding of the Hegelian formula we delineate the following: In Hegelian language, it is the opposition that any determination carries within itself. It is set aside by negating which is finally set aside by the negation of negation which is synthesis. Thus, thesis, antithesis and synthesis together form the formula which is regarded by the Hegelians of both the schools as the secret of the development and reality. And this formula has been accepted by the advanced minds all over the thinking world. In the place of the formula of "dialectics", Kant has said previously, that society advances through "antagonism". Hegel says, "The history of the world is not the theatre of happiness, periods of happiness are the blank pages in it, for they are periods of harmony".[1] Thus, "to be" is an abstraction, but through the dialectical process it is "becoming". Hence, everything is "changing".

This Hegelian formula was developed by the left-wing Hegelians like Feuerbach, Karl Marx and others as "class-struggle" which has its basis in the socio-economic condition of the time. Again, the biologists call this formula as the "struggle for existence".

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1. Hegel: "The Philosophy of History". p. 28.

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As regards Dialectical-Historical-Materialism, its best exponent J. Stalin has said the following: "It is called dialectical materialism because its approach to the phenomena of nature, its method of studying and apprehending them, is *dialectical,* while its interpretation of the phenomena of nature, its conception of these phenomena, its theory, is *materialistic.* Historical Materialism is the extension of the principles of dialectical materialism to the study of social life, an application of the principles of dialectical materialism to the phenomena of the life of society, to the study of society out of its history".[2] Again Stalin says, "Contrary to metaphysics, dialectics holds that internal contradictions are inherent in all things and phenomena of nature, for they all have their negative and positive sides. Something dying away and something developing, and that the struggle between these opposites, the struggle between the old and the new constitutes the internal content of the process of development. The dialectical method therefore holds that the process of development from the lower to the higher takes place not as a harmonious unfolding of phenomena, but as a disclosure of the contradictions inherent in things and phenomena, as a "struggle" of opposite tendencies which operate on the basis of those contradictions".[3] Again, Lenin has said, "In its proper meaning, dialectics is the study of the contradiction within the very essence of things".[4] Further, he has said, "Development is the 'struggle' of opposites".[5]

Thus fortified with the knowledge about dialectics, we should proceed to analyze the social phenomena of the time. When Reformation Movement was making a clean sweep of all Indian institutions, and the people were learning about English traditions, then dialectically arose the movement of Nationalism. The impact of the modern European thought on the Indian mind has created a revolution in the mind of the latter. The first fruit was

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2. "Dialectical and Historical Materialism", p. 5. (Burmon Publishing House, Calcutta).
3. Ibid: Op.-cit., pp. 9-10.
4. Quoted by Stalin: Op.-cit., p. 10.
5. Lenin: "Selected Works", vol. IX, pp. 81-82.

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the *Reform* Movement. Then the time-spirit brought the second fruit—the *Renaissance.*

The Renaissance Movement began through literature. Bepinchandra Pal says that in a special sense, Bankimchandra was 'the prophet' of this renaissance. Hemchandra was 'the poet' of this movement. The writer has narrated elsewhere that these men formed an organized attempt to instil patriotism and the idea of independence into the minds of the youngmen. The 'Bangadarshan', a Bengalee magazine started in 1873-74 by Bankimchandra, functioned the same purpose what, according to Bepinchandra Pal, "the French Encyclopaedists did for eighteenth century European thought and French literature".[6] The effect of this literary renaissance was immense. Bankimchandra's writings aroused patriotic sentiments and began to fix the mind's eyes of the people towards what their ancestors did in the past in contrast with the dismal present. Again, Michael Madhusudan Datta struck a new chord in the literature. As already said, Keshabchandra's reception in England aroused a race-pride. All these have worked together to create a new mental and moral atmosphere amongst men. Thus a pride of one's own ancestors arose in the minds of the people. In this way, a difference ensued in the time-lag of the time of starting the Reform Movement and that of the period which we are describing here.

The Bengal Bourgeoisie has become assertive and is becoming conscious of itself. In this matter, B. C. Pal again says, "The new generation of English-educated Bengalees had already commenced to advance themselves to positions of trust and responsibility in the New Administration. In the learned professions of law and medicine also, they were gradually asserting themselves as against the British members. A new spirit of independence and self-assertion was increasingly manifesting itself in the conduct and conversations of the English-educated Bengalee. All these had already commenced to provoke a racial conflict in the country. Hemchandra was, in a special sense, the poet of this

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6. B. C. Pal: "Memories of my Life and Time", p. 226.

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new conflict and of the new racial self-respect and sensitive patriotism, born of it".[7]

Thus a class-conflict between the Indian bourgeoisie and the alien dominant bourgeoisie has inevitably begun. We have seen that it was not strong at the time of R. G. Ghose and Kailaschandra Basu. In this way, the field being ready, came Anandamohan Basu from England with the fame of being the first Indian Wrangler of the Cambridge University and Surendranath Banerjea, being unjustly dismissed from the Civil Service, joined hands with him and both of them started the "Students' Association." Pal says that Surendranath's eloquence and burning patriotism lent a new strength and inspiration to the student movement.

Contrasting the two movements, the reform movement of Keshabchandra and the political movement started by Surendranath, Pal says again, "Keshabchandra Sen's appeal was exclusively to the religious and moral sensibilities of the rising generation of his English-educated countrymen. But the education which they received in their schools and colleges had very seriously unsettled their faith not only in the traditional religion of their own people but more or less in all religions. The Brahmo leader was able, therefore, to touch a comparatively small section of the rising youths of his country.....a large section of the educated intelligentsia of their time was left more or less cold by the Brahmo propaganda".[8]

On the other hand, Surendranath brought a new message of freedom. He acquainted the youth of the country with the life and deed of the great Italian revolutionary, Joseph Mazzini. At the same time, the lives of Mazzini and Garibaldi were translated into Bengalee by Jogendranath Vidyabhusan. The inspiration of Mazzini thrilled the youth for half-a-century or more. Thus, a new generation began to grow with a new outlook. The Indo-Aryan mind was slowly moving away from dry reform movements without proper economic background to experiments in

7. B. C. Pal: Op.-cit., p. 228-229.
8. B. C. Pal: Op.-cit., pp. 233-234.

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the political field. Further, the fact to be noted here is that, the movement started by Nabagopal Mitra called "Hindu Maha Mela" and his "National Paper" in the early seventies of the Nineteenth Century, evoked a national feeling in the minds of thinking persons.

Again, the conflict of the interests of the conscious Indian bourgeoisie and that of the foreign one began to heighten the feeling of nationalism. Thus all these contributed to the awakening of national consciousness with a yearning for the past glory of the country. Hence, there is no wonder that the Renaissance brought a respect for the old culture and a veneration for the past. Indeed, the dialectical contradiction brought a fascination for the past known as *Mediaevalism*. This is called the "Reaction" by the reformers belonging to the Brahmo Samaj. In this matter Pal again says, "Many things contributed to this reaction. The revival of mediaevalism in the Brahmo Samaj itself was certainly by no means the least powerful of these".[9] Then in 1876 or thereabout came the Theosophic leaders from outside. Pal again says, "And the Theosophical Society which they founded was perhaps the most powerful of the forces that brought in this movement of Hindu religious revival and social reaction".[10]

In the meantime, the dialectics of Historical Materialism threw up Swami Dayananda who gave a new interpretation of the scripture and the social laws emanating from it. For a time Swami Dayananda joined hands with the foreign theosophic leaders previously having failed to come to terms with Keshabchandra Sen. Indeed, in those days Dayananda's movement was not in accord with the Reform Movement of Bengal as the latter is unvedic one. Again, Dayananda threw overboard the established interpretation of the scripture and advocated the doctrine of going back to the Vedic days. Indeed, he tried to overstep mediævalism by going back to the pristine Veda. To him, the time-lag between the both periods was not perceptible. But it has been a reform movement in the North since that time, though considered a retrograde one according to the spirit of the Brahmo Samaj.

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9-10. B. C. Pal: Op.-cit., pp. 424; 425.

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Thus there have been dialectical contradictions in the materialistic history of the country,—what is reformation in one part of the country is considered as retrogression in another part. Again, according to the law of dialectics, every thesis bears contradiction within its own womb. If the reform movement has been progressive in certain matters, it bore oppositions within itself by denying the past and ignoring the socio-political situation of the time. In this way, one of the laws of dialectics,[11] "the Law of Interpenetration of Opposites" is clearly discernible here. Further, it has been in that state till the end of British rule!

Taking a historical perspective it cannot be said that a certain person or some persons are responsible for the retrogression of the reform movements inaugurated by the Brahmo Samaj. On the other hand, the Brahmo Samaj, by sticking to a particular pattern of religio-social program and a particular world-view regarding the upliftment of the Indian people, has not been able to move along with the time-spirit. We have seen that with the rise of the militant bourgeoisie and *pari passu* the socio-economic situation, the mind of the people began to turn towards the solution of the national question of bread and butter and its place under the sun. The Indo-Aryan mind began gradually to advance towards the fundamental question of national emancipation.

It is truism to say that those who were dubbed as "reactionaries" became the fathers of militant nationalism. To-day, they are respected as those who had the foresight of inaugurating the national movement in its intellectual aspect which took practical shape two decades later. We must remember the role that they played in inspiring the revolutionary movement of latter days. Their spiritual contributions to the movement of freedom is indelible in the history of India. The reformers, being fastened in their old peg of early nineteenth century particular religio-social program, could not wander away from it in the latter quarter of the same era. They raised a *Franckenstein* of all religious and social evils which they thought to be the root of the downfall of the Indian people, and they were frightened

11. F. Engels: "Dialectics of Nature", p. 26.

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when the question of independent nationality came up.[12] Unless that spectre is removed, India cannot regain her political freedom—that has been their dictum. It is true, that the members of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj were more advanced in the matter of politics than those of Nababidhan Brahmo Samaj to whom "loyalty" is a creed embossed in their flag of New Dispensation. The members of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj joined the Indian Association and their leaders were in the Indian National Congress.

But the politics of the Indian Association and the Congress of the time became a retrogressive one during the march of events. But apart from the Congress politics, the Brahmo Samaj fell back from the tumultuous onward march of Nationalism. In the latter-day militant national movement, the Brahmo Samaj failed to play an important role. Those youngmen of the Brahmo Samaj who joined the national movement in its revolutionary or non-violent phase, had to change their mentality by being transformed by the solvent of nationalism. The great Aurobinda Ghose, in latter-days known as the Saint of Pondicherry, who was one of the joint-inaugurators of the Revolutionary Movement in Bengal, became a member of the *Sanatana* society. The same is the case of Deshabandhu Chittaranjan Das whose exuberant nationalism could not be contained in the Brahmo Samaj. The same is the case with a well-known revolutionary leader, Devabrata Basu, later on known as Swami Pragnananda of the Ramakrishna Mission.[13]

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12. In 1907 before the present writer was incarcerated in jail as the editor of the "Yugantar" he met late Pandit Shivnath Sastri, the minister of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj on the street. Pandit Sastri previously knew him as an ardent reformer, but the writer later on by joining the revolutionary movement eluded him. Hence he asked the writer: "What are you doing now-a-days?" The writer told him about his work. He said that a group of youngmen used to come to him who practise dagger-play, etc., where are they now. The writer answered, they are alright, they are working. Then he said, "I am thinking that after the expulsion of the British, will you be able to govern yourself?" The same Franckenstein still hovered over them even during the hey-day of "Swadeshi" movement!
13. In this matter, the writer is speaking from personal experience. There were no recruits for the freedom movement of Bengal from the Brahmo Samaj when the movement was in full force, though in the beginning there were a few converts to the national cause.

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Nationalism in India like elsewhere draws a man naturally towards the past history of the country. Simple anti-British feeling is not enough to make a man a lover of his country. He must have roots in it. But the Reform Movement inaugurated by the Brahmo Samaj had no roots in the soil. The eclectic Brahmo Samaj having no roots in the soil, began to wither away. It is sad, but it is true. Dialectics of Historical Materialism is accountable for it. Those who blame the Hindu Revivalists and Swami Vivekananda for what they call "reaction" but what is "renaissance" in actuality, do not realize that till the last days of British rule, the Brahmo Samaj had been the bulwark of political reaction. The very independence of India has proved that their thesis was not correct. Antitheses have contradicted that thesis, though synthesis is not yet in sight.

*A propos* the topic of Reformation versus Reaction, we quote an Indian diplomat of repute, Sardar Panikkar, who, comparing the changes that have taken place in Eastern Asia by the impact of Europe on the same, says, "When the Asian peoples recovered from the 'first intoxication of the West', as Yone Naguchi[14] called it, they were able to fall back and find sustenance for their intellectual self-respect in a culture which had attracted some of the superior minds of the West. In fact, while resistance to political domination of Europe provided the motive force of the new nationalism, its justification and strength lay in a growing appreciation of its own culture to which European scholarship had also materially contributed".[15]

By taking a broad view on the historical horizon of the ancient countries of Asia of modern time, we find that with the awakening of national respect in the minds of these historical peoples, they had to fall back on their past culture to draw sustenance for the present-day struggle for existence *vis-a-vis* the Western dominance. India is not alone to be blamed on this score. And this craze for head-long rush to Occidentalism was checked in Japan by traditionalist reaction which the Shinto teaching emphasized, as

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14. A noted Japanese poet who visited India before the war.
15. K. M. Panikkar: "Asia and Western Dominance", p. 493, 1053.

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admitted by Panikkar,[16] and in India by the so-called "Revivalism" which, when properly evaluated, is nothing but aggressive nationalism in its cultural aspect. It cut across the Indian whirlpool of conservatism of the Indian Pharisees and the intoxication of the mind of the Indian Sadducees by the strong drink of Western civilization. It awakened respect for India's hoary culture and reinstated self-esteem in their mind. This so-called reaction in India cured the Indian mind like the similar condition of the Japanese mind about which Naguchi said, "When we awoke from that intoxication sadder and even inclined to despise ourselves"![17] How true was this in Indian situation of the time!

16. Ibid: Op.-cit., p. 347.
17. Ibid: Op.-cit., p. 347.

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## VI

## RAMAKRISHNA PARAMHANSA

As this book is no *apologia* for any creed or sect, but a narration of the current events that finally led to the triumphant emergence of Swami Vivekananda, the disciple of Ramakrishna Paramhansa, a few words pertinent to the latter is noted down here. As there are books in galore in Bengalee and in English pertaining to his life and history, it is extraneous to our task to repeat them here. Only a few salient points are delineated in this place.

From all the facts collected about him, this much can be gathered that Brahmananda Keshabchandra Sen and Rev. Hestie, the Principal of the General Assembly's Institution (now-a-days called the Scottish Church College) were first responsible for making Ramakrishna known to the public. It has been already narrated that Rev. Hestie told his students to go and visit the Brahman devotee of Dakshineswar who gets "trance". Probably he heard from Keshabchandra about Ramakrishna. Keshabchandra after meeting Ramakrishna was attracted to him. He had the frankness and boldness to propagate Ramakrishna's name in his organ "The Indian Mirror" from 1875. It was Keshabchandra who first collected the sayings of Ramakrishna and published them.[1]

It is said by some that the title "Paramhansa" was given by Keshabchandra himself. As early as 1875, 14th May, in "Dharma Tattva", the Bengalee organ of Keshab, we find a sketch of the life of "Ramakrishna Paramhansa". It is only a bigoted purblind stickler of forms that could not find in him the traits of a "Paramhansa" as delineated in mediaeval religious books. But he was above that description. It is said even that the name *Ramakrishna* was not his original one. He

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1. 'Sri Ramakrishna Paramhansa' (in contemporary eyes). By Brajendranath Bandopadhyaya and Sajanikanta Das, 1952 (in Bengalee).

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was named "Gadadhar Chattopadhyaya" as is manifest in an illegible handwriting of his.[2]

As regards the relation between both the religious preachers, the organ of Keshab, "The Indian Mirror," in its 9th October issue 1881, says, "Friday was the day set apart for our autumnal festival. So we went to Dakshineswar to pass a few hours in a friendly talk with the good Paramhansa, with whom our readers have become probably quite familiar by this time. He loves our minister.... The first thing that greets our eyes is a profound, respectful, sincere and affectionate bow on each side and then the complete immersion of the saint in a few minutes' trance. That is the work of *love*. He regains his consciousness little by little and when he is half-awake begins the conversation as edifying in its nature as it is marked by all the humour and humility that characterize a genuine son of God. The subject of our talk on Friday last was the renunciation of self, a topic which he always likes to descant upon. Two obstacles, according to him, lie in the path of spiritual regeneration—the love of woman and the love of money, and on this day he discussed whether it was possible for a regenerated man to live in the world and yet be above it. Those who affect piety are not necessarily above the world. But one who is freed from self, remains in the world like a cord that is burnt.....in other words the liberated soul moves about in its affairs, and retains every semblance of the ego, and yet it is not in reality the ego, but something above it." Again, "The Indian Mirror" in its 11th December 1881 issue says, "The Paramhansa of Dakshineswar is rousing the spirit of Devotion and spreading the love of God among the educated classes in the City". Again, "The New Dispensation", in its 8th January 1882 issue says, "Those who have watched the later phases of religious thought and life in Calcutta, must have been struck to find how the venerable Paramhansa of Dakshineswar is serving as a marvellous connecting link between the Hindus and the Brahmos of the New Dispensation. There have been a series of religious meetings of late

2. Vide the frontispiece. Handwriting photo is given in the above-mentioned book.

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in the houses of respectable Hindus, in which the representatives of the two communities were harmoniously blended together so as to form a unity of thought and devotion, which was alike striking and interesting..... Learned pandits, educated youths, orthodox vaishnavas and yogis gather in numbers..... What this spiritual fusion and living union may lead to in the end who can divine? The ways of the Lord are past finding out." Thus Ramakrishna led a non-sectarian life of devotion.

Again, *Paricharika,* a Bengalee organ of the New Dispensation (Brahmo Samaj of India) in its issue of August 1886, while announcing the death of Ramakrishna says among other things: "A devotee like him who is lust-conquering, other-worldly (*vairagi*) and a great yogi is not seen anywhere. He used to laugh, weep, dance and his nature was simple like a boy.... He was polite per excellence. He was the first to make *namaskar* (salutation with folded hands) to any one who met him, and used to show respect and reverence to womankind in whom he saw God in mother's form... Acharya Keshabchandra Sen introduced him to the public. Seeing him, the Acharya recognized him and was especially attracted to him, likewise Ramakrishna also became enamoured of him. The Acharya was specially benefitted by the life of the Paramhansa and the Paramhansa also was specially benefitted by the life of the Acharya."

Further, the musical apostle-disciple of Keshabchandra Sen, Trailokyanath Sanyal, in his "Keshab Charita" (Life of Keshab) says: "By the exchange of religious ideas of these two great men (Mahatmas) Brahmo Samaj has made great progress in the matter of devotion (Bhakti)...the Bhakti fervour and the expression of motherhood of God that is being expressed to-day in the Brahmo Samaj, is due mainly to the influence of Ramakrishna Paramhansa.....again, the influence of Keshab has refined the religious life of the Paramhansa. Formerly, he did not accept the free-will or responsibility of man, also the ability of a householder to acquire Bhakti and renunciation. ...Now, he works as a support of the Brahmo Samaj in an unsectarian way. The religious world has much benefitted by the union of both."

Another disciple of Keshabchandra, Upadhyaya Gourgobinda

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Rai, in his "Acharya Keshabchandra" says: "The meeting of Paramhansa and Keshabchandra was an auspicious union. This union was not possible two days later or two days earlier. Whenever any new thought has arisen in the mind of Keshabchandra, the necessary preparation has come to him voluntarily..... Keshabchandra knew how to use the means sent to him by God. ...Though he (Paramhansa) is a worshipper of Sakti, a Hindu-jogi, yet forsaking early all hostile attitude to other religions, respected all the founders of religions and accepted them as incarnations of God. His room was adorned with the pictures of all the Mahatmas. Getting such a man, Keshab was beyond joy, and their mutual visit became of daily occurrence."

Again, Pandit Shivnath Sastri, the minister of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, has said in his autobiography, that after meeting Ramakrishna the idea that gained uppermost in his mind was that religion is one, its forms are different. "Ramakrishna used to express the fact of this liberalism and universalism of religion oft and anon. An illustration of it I remember clearly. Once I took my Christian clergy friend of Bhowanipur to Dakshineswar to visit Ramakrishna. When I told him, 'Sir, this Christian friend of mine has came to see you', Ramakrishna, hearing it, bowing touched his head on the ground and said, 'My hundred *pranams* to the feet of Jesus Christ'. Seeing it, my Christian friend was astonished and asked: 'Sir, what do you think of Jesus when you are bowing at his feet'? The answer was, 'Why,' an incarnation (*avatar*) of God'! Then Ramakrishna explained what he meant by an avatar". Finally, Sastri said, "I have greatly realized the universalism of religion by mixing with Ramakrishna".

After the death of Ramakrishna, the "Sulava Samachar and Kusadaha", a Bengalee paper started by Keshabchandra Sen, noted the following in its issue of 27th August 1886: "On last Monday (23rd August, 1886) at 9 o'clock in the morning a *sankirtana* party started from 13, Simla Street carrying the ashes of Ramakrishna Paramhansadeva in a copper jar.....lastly two preachers of *Nababidhan* (Keshabchandra's Brahmo Samaj) followed the suite with downcast heads. The jar was laid in the brickbuilt hollow of the plinth and after laying flowers on it many made

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respectful pranams. Then Utsab took place in the garden of Babu Jadunath Mitra."

Further, the "Dharma Tattva," the Bengalee organ of the Nababidhan Brahmo Samaj, in an obituary announced the following in its issue of 31st August, 1886: "On Thursday evening before *Bhadrotsab* (7th Bhadra) Bhai Trailokyanath Sanyal gave a discourse on the life of the late Paramhansa. That day morning at 7 o'clock, a special prayer service was held at Devalaya for Paramhansa. All the preachers spent that day by going barefooted and eating vegetarian food (*havishyanna*)". Thus the preachers of the Brahmo Samaj of India, latterly known as Nababidhan Brahmo Samaj, observed the usual Hindu form of mourning during the funeral service held after his demise. Then the paper continues: "Some prominent Brahmos of Nababidhan followed the funeral bier at the burning place. At the front of the procession was carried the ensigns of Trident (*Trisula*) and Omkar of Hinduism, the *Khunti* of Buddhism, the Crescent of Islam and the Cross of Christianity....At the burning place, Bhai Trailokya sang sitting by the side of the holy dead body....In the afternoon, Bhai Trailokyanath Sanyal, accompanied by two or three preachers and other lay-Brahmos, went to the place of Samadhi. There Bhai Girishchandra Sen read the utterances of Ramakrishna and Bhai Trailokyanath Sanyal sang a few songs relating to God as the mother". Then the same paper says, that "many preachers of Nababidhan observed the usual Hindu mode of mourning for 3-4 days."

The "Dharma Tattva" in the same issue in a leader on "Late Ramakrishna Paramhansa" said, "what a misfortune has come to our country!.....The sadhus who had close touch with the Acharyadeva began to disappear one by one after his demise (8th January, 1884). The Sikh guru Nagaji of Dumraon died, the Paoharibaba of Ghazipur has hidden himself, the Naga Sanyasi of Haldibari died just after the demise of the Acharyadeva. He, with whom Acharyadeva had most intimate connection and friendship, he, who was a special limb of *Bidhan* (religion), that jewel of a sadhu mahatma Ramakrishna Paramhansa has ascended to Heaven". Then the paper gives a life-sketch of Ramakrishna. It says, that "for 8 years of austere practice of *tapas* due to going without



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food and sleep, he emaciated his body. He did not practise yoga according to the fixed rules of yoga sastra. He followed various ways of sadhana to conquer the senses, to clean the mind and to acquire vairagya. Sometime he made sadhana as a female companion (sakti) of God by dressing himself as a woman, sometime dressed as a Mohammedan he ate onion and recited the name of Allah, sometime impersonating as a Hanuman-monkey by wearing a tail, he recited the name of Rama.... The description of Srimatbhagavata regarding the exalted condition of a bhakta is discernible in the life of Ramakrishna. His God was a mixture as Sakara and Nirakara. He used to say that he never believed in Kali made by hands: His Kali was Chinmayi. 'My mother is ghana Satchidananda' he used to say. He never wore *gerua* the outward badge of a sadhu; many a time he has been seen wearing black-bordered *dhoti* (cloth). It is true that he used to bear Brahmanical sacred thread on his shoulder, but sometime he used to throw it away as a bondage of life. His nephew Hridaya protected him by following like a shadow. He used to feed him, made him wear clothes, and put on the sacred thread again when he used to throw it off". From this description we surmise that he never completely cast off his Brahmanical sacred thread.

Again, Krishnakumar Mitra, a member of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj has said the following in his autobiography: "Acharya Keshabchandra, Pandit Shivnath Sastri and other Brahmos brought Ramakrishna out of his unknown room of Dakshineswar and made him public, and gave him the title 'Paramhansa'..... Narendranath was attracted to him by his simple and devotional life. It is true that Narendranath became the disciple of Ramakrishna, but this disciple made his guru 'unsectarian'."

Another person who had been a frequenter of the Brahmo Samaj, wrote in an article in the Bengalee magazine called "Prabasi" in Falgun 1342 B.S. that one day, coming to Kamal Kutir (Keshab's residence) Ramakrishna says, "You see Keshab, by coming to you my fourteen *poah*[3] goddess Kali melts down in water like a salted doll. I became a worshipper of the formless one (Nirakar)". He also says, that "he used to condemn the

3. It refers to the size of the Hindu idol.

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outward signs of wearing *gerua* cloth, wearing of beads and smearing the body with *tilak*, etc."

Again, Nagendranath Gupta the well-known *litterateur* in his book, "Reflections and Reminiscences" 1947, has narrated, that in the steam-boat trip of Ramakrishna with Keshabchandra in which party he was present, the following conversation took place between Keshabchandra and Ramakrishna: "The next moment he lost all interest in the people present and began to speak of the various ways in which he used to perform his *sadhana*. And so the marvellous monologue went on until the Paramhansa began to speak of the Nirakara (formless) Brahman. He repeated the word *Nirakara* two or three times, and then quietly passed into Samadhi.....while the Paramhansa remained unconscious, Keshabchandra Sen explained that recently there had been some conversation between himself and Paramhansa about the Nirakara Brahman, and that the Paramhansa appeared to be profoundly moved".

Again, in *"Vedavyas"*, the organ of Hindu revivalism in its issue of February 1888, the editor says that he first saw Ramakrishna at the place of Pandit Sasadhar Tarkachudamani. Further he says, "We used to visit him frequently to hear his nectar-like instructions.....we used to see his place frequented by men of all religions. Besides Christian, Mussalman, Buddhist, Brahmo, Jaina, Hindu, countless men of other religions used to come to him and respectfully bowed at his feet. We have seen Keshab-chandra, the originator of Navabidhan Brahmo religion, sitting with devotional attitude near his feet."

Now, let us hear what the direct disciples of Ramakrishna say. The "Tattva Manjari", the organ of Dr. Ramchandra Datta, the house-holder disciple of Ramakrishna, in its issue of August-September says: "That mahatma whose real name we do not know and the name by which he is known in this province is not the real one, and there will be a change of ideas if marked with the name. But there is no option. That great man who was known to the public as Ramakrishna Paramhansa existed as the Great Cause of this paper. By his grace we have preached his ideas and opinions.

"The sadhus used to call Ramakrishna as Paramhansa, and it is

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to be surmised that Totapuri gave him that title. He used to get a sectarian name when he made *sadhana* according to the tenet of that sect. But he hid it so carefully that we never got an inkling of it... Really, he could not be fit in any sect. But it is a truism that all sects were his. Ramakrishnadeva acknowledged God to be one without a second, and perceived him everywhere. He instructed everyone to that purport. For this reason, he could mix with every sect as their own. In that time it was scarcely possible to recognize him to be of another religious persuation.....nobody before Ramakrishna condensed all the *sadhanas* into one or pushed it". Again, in the "Reminiscenses of Saradasundari Devi", the mother of Keshabchandra Sen, she says, "I liked him (Ramakrishna) very much... One day I accompanied Keshab to Dakshineswar. He said, 'you see mother, with great difficulty I have got Mother, but it seems that by mixing with Keshab, that hold is going to be lost, perhaps in the end I come to Nirakara'."[4]

Further, let us hear of a monk-disciple of Ramakrishna, Swami Saradananda. He says, "I have already said how the leaders of the Brahmo Samaj of India beginning from the first acharya Keshabchandra to others.....have been benefitted by the ideal of staunch respect for their own religion and sacrifice of everything for God. Now the question is: did Thakur (Ramakrishna) learn anything by coming in contact with Keshabchandra and other Brahmos? Many of the devotees of Ramakrishna will not hesitate to say 'no' to the query. But the rule of exchange is seen current in this world. Hence, it is undoubtedly unreasonable to say that Thakur did not learn anything by coming in contact with the Brahmo Samaj which is founded on Occidental ideology and training. For this reason, our impression is different. We say that while trying to give the Brahmo Samaj his spiritual experiences, the Thakur learnt many things himself. It is our duty to discuss here about the matter that he learnt from them as the result of this contact....".[5]

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4. "The reminiscences of Saradasundari Devi, the mother of Keshab", edited by Jogendralal Khastagir.
5. "Sri Sri Ramakrishna Lilaprasanga", pt. V. Ch. II, pp. 44-45.

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Thus so far we have drawn the picture of Ramakrishna Paramhansa from various sources. In going through all the records of various persons and sects we arrive at the result that Ramakrishna was not the ordinary type of *Sadhu* as generally understood or seen by the Hindus. He was unassuming, polite to all irrespective of caste or creed. He never wore any badge of religious distinction which marks a sectary. To him every religion is a path to salvation. He acknowledged the new-fangled Brahmo religion as a way to attain God. After *kirtana* while making pranams to God and the *Bhaktas,* he never forgot to make pranams to the modern Brahmognanis (Brahmos)".[6] He dissuaded his disciple Jogen (Jogananda) from getting into the hands of Hatha-yogis as Hatha-yoga does not lead any person anywhere to God.[7] He persuaded Niranjan (Niranjanananda) to cease to act as a medium in the *seances* of the spiritualists.[8] He spoke of *'siddhai'*—miracle-mongering as obstacle to attainment of God.[9] "Siddhi" according to him does not help realization of God.[10] He was against the profession of a Guru,[11] and he had aversion for the learning that makes a priest.[12] Again, he was severely against current priesthood.[13] Thus his religion was a straightforward faith in God. He believed that salvation lies through devotion.

We have already seen that his chief house-holder disciple, Dr. Ramachandra Datta has said, that "he could mix with every sect as their own". As a result he had disciples from non-Hindu communities. As an illustration we quote the following from

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6. Ibid: Op. cit., pt. V, I, pp. 22-23.
7. Ibid: Op. cit., pt. II, pp. 104-105; pt. III, pp. 29-30.
8. Gurudas Barman: "Sri Sri Ramakrishna Charita", pt. I, pp. 215-216; also Baikunthanath Sanyal: "Sri Sri Ramakrishna Lilamrita", p. 312,
9. "Sri Sri Ramakrishna Kathamrita" by M., pt. IV, pp. 149-150.
10. "Sri Sri Ramakrishna Lilaprasanga", pt. III, p. 258; pt. V, p. 193.
11. "Sri Sri Ramakrishna Kathamrita" by M., pt. II, p. 15; pt. IV, p. 157, "Sakha", November, 1886, quoted in "Ramakrishna Paramhansa (in contemporary eyes)", p. 104.
12. "The Indian Mirror", 10 September, 1886; "Dharmatattva", 31 August, 1886; "Sri Sri Ramakrishna Lilaprasanga", vol. II, p. 58.
13. "Dharmatattva", 16 September, 1886, quoted in "Ramakrishna Paramhansa" (in contemporary eyes), p. 77.

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Sri Sashibhusan Samanta of Dakshineswar, whose father was a devotee of Ramakrishna, and who himself as a boy frequently kept his company. He in his book dealing about the reminiscenses[14] of Ramakrishna, has given a picture of a group of his devotees composed of Hindus and Moslems. In the addenda of this book he says, "In the first part, the photos of Srijukta Bepinchandra Bhattacharya, Srijukta Naranchandra Ghose, Sri Sheikh Abdul Sobhan and Sri Sheikh, Barakatulla are given. But how Ramakrishnadeva has played in what mood with them, will be narrated in the second part. Again, in what time and what for, late Sheikh Namdar and Sheikh Kamdar, Sheikh Machammolla, Sheikh Khetir Mistri, Sheikh Mayaraddi Molla and other mahatmas have played with what feeling of bhakti will be narrated in the second part".[15]

This evinces clearly that Ramakrishna had Moslem devotees. This is further corroborated by the fact that in 1902, after the demise of Swami Vivekananda, the writer's elder brother Mohendranath once coming back from Belur Math, narrated to mother, that the son of a Moslem disciple of Ramakrishna came to visit the Math. He was a Sub-Registrar in the Sundarbans area. Even it is narrated by his biographers that he had a Christian devotee who after meeting him practised yoga in the Himalayas.

This liberality drew all sorts of persons around him. It was a section of liberal bourgeoisie that came to him. The members of the middle class, who according to the standard of the time were dubbed *radicals* went to the reformers' camp; but those who were not reformers, yet were not hide-bound Sanatanists, used to frequent his place. The conservative members of vested interests calling themselves orthodox, have shunned every liberal movement since the days of Sri Chaitanya. It was the liberals who clustered round him as his latter-day disciples.

The bourgeoisie of the latter part of the nineteenth century was floundering in the cross-currents of rationalism of the West

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14. "Sri Sri Ramakrishna Lilatattva", pt. I (in Bengalee).
15. It seems the second part never came out due to the demise of the author.

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and the mediævalism of the East. The reformers were sweeping the past overboard. But already dialectical contradiction has set in. Cry has been raised: "Halt, don't let the Indian past be forgotten". In between the currents stepped in Ramakrishna. Of course, his ideologies were mediæval. His religious training and experiences had mediæval inspiration. Hindu sects that he came in contact with were mediæval in their origin. He was acquainted with the ideologies of this period. Hinduism that he knew was the epigonous product during the long period of slavery.

In the period of Indo-Aryan epigonous religious experiences, North India has passed through momentous changes in political, social and religious matters. Foreign conquest has ushered in new problems. It was a period of life and death struggle with the Hindus. During this momentous period there was a trend of dialectical interpenetration of the opposites. There were cross-currents of two different thoughts commingling to form a synthesis. On the one hand, the *Santa* movements led by Kabir, Nanak, Rajjabji, Dadu, Sheikh Farid, etc., were trying to make a synthesis between Hindu and Moslem religious ideologies; on the other hand the fanaticism of the Moslem ruling class being reacted by the conservatism of the Hindu vested interests, produced bigotry which acted as deterrants to the desired goal. Thus dialectical contradictions in the historical materialism of the period created antitheses. In this way, negations stepped in and are still continuing. Thus, while the antitheses between the two warring groups were intervening to bring about the desired negation of negation, the foreign pressure was bringing the hitherto warring Hindu sects together in a lump called by the foreigners as *bud-parasti* i.e., idolaterous people. Thus, this general nomenclature of the religions of the conquered peoples, the *Hindis*[16], is called in modern perlance, "Hinduism"!

The result of this pressure from outside created a seeming synthesis of the Indian sects. For that reason, Krishna, Rama, Kali, Tara, etc., were all regarded ultimately as one, as different

16. It seems that in order to distinguish the Indian converts from the idolaters, the word "Hindu" is invented, while the Indians in general are called *Hindis*.

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manifestations of the Supreme Deity. The Buddhist goddesses like Ekajata, Tara, Ugratara, found niches in Brahmanical Pantheon as Kali, etc. Buddhist-Tantric practices were christened as "sakti-cult" by the Agambagishes. Buddhist rites were accepted in the neo-smritis, etc. Thus, there is no wonder that the latter-day sects during Moslem rule got a superficial coloring of synthesis. Yet, at heart there is no love lost between the Krishnaites and the Ramaites in Upper India, the same being the case with the Saktas and the Vaishnavas in Bengal. Ramaprasad the great devotee of Kali was once taken to a Raslila ground. He bowed to Krishna by singing: "My mother has become an enjoyer of the *Ras* (Rasbehari) by coming to *Vrindabana*". In this way, he temporarily identified the two gods of the rival sects as one with different manifestations. But this seeming synthesis in Hegel's language is a "superficial and sensuous one." Indeed it is a sort of *Theocrasia* i.e., fusing one god with another, that has been formed during the Moslem rule. Surely this Theocrasia is not a synthesis.[17]

On the contrary, in the South, where there have been no foreign pressure, the difference between the Smartas (Saivas) and the Vaishnavas, are as sharp in every way as between the Hindus and the non-Hindus in the North. Hence, we see that during the long period of foreign rule, no real negation of negation has been brought about in religious ideologies. The seeming unity of different gods, and the sects is not the synthesis we are looking for in the Indian history. As Ramakrishna has been influenced by mediaeval conceptions, hence it cannot be upheld that he has arrived at the synthesis of all religions. "Every religion is good for its devotee" does not negate the contradictions that have come in the way of Indo-Aryan religious experiences. To say that God is formless (Nirakara) as well an anthropomorphic (Sakara) is not the synthesis. Truly, Hegel said, "There is no antithesis in the mind of a Hindu".[18] This characteristic follows the Hindu in all phases

17. Regarding the import of *Theocrasia* see H. G. Wells: "The Outlines of History", pp. 351; 546-547.
18. Vide "Philosophy of History", on India.

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of his life's activity. As a result, he has not been able to form a homogeneous nationality. Real synthesis which is the negation of negation of existing contradictions in religious life of the Indians is yet far away.

The chief characteristic of Ramakrishna's teaching was his emphasis on universalism of religion. He expressed this faith in his own unsectarian way. His chief disciple Swami Vivekananda says, "He would eat and dress like a people he wanted to understand, take their initiation and use their language." "One must learn", he said, "to put oneself into another man's very soul." And this method was his own![19] It seems he had a mental *Theocrasia* of his own.

The writer, besides the disciples of Ramakrishna, in his early youth, knew Brahmos and leaders of other organizations who knew Ramakrishna very well. The writer heard lots of incidents about Ramakrishna's life from them. These Brahmo gentlemen mixed freely with him. To him all sects and castes and classes were welcome. But it must be said here, that an attempt is being made in some quarter to depict him as a conservative Brahman who followed the taboo-prohibitions of neo-smriti of Navadvipa Brahmanical orthodoxy in his habits of life. But there are definite recorded testimonies that he was above those inhibitive injunctions.[20] It is clear that by casting away the universalism of Ramakrishna, the orthodox Brahmanical priestcraft is engulfing Ramakrishnaism. A religion is judged by the influence it exerts on the society by leading it to a definite goal of life. Hence it is to be said, that unlike the reform movements of the present and of mediæval days, Ramakrishnaism has not moulded the society according to its own ideal. It is following the old beaten Brahmanical rut. Here, we close the chapter by noting that if the non-sectarian and universal spirit that Ramakrishna preached, had been applied in the national aspect of life, then perhaps a good deal of sectarian rancour which appeared later on in the country, would have not arisen.

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19. Nivedita: "The Master as I saw him", p. 229, we have already seen that this bit of information tallies with what Dr. Ramchandra Datta, a house-holder disciple of Ramakrishna has given.
20. Vide Sri M. "Kathamrita", vol. V.

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As a postscript it should be mentioned here that Ramakrishna left many house-holder disciples, admirers as well as some young disciples, who were more or less of teen age. Some of these disciples and admirers used to frequent the Brahmo Samaj. The house-holder disciples took charge of him during his illness, and the youngmen nursed him to his last moment.

After the demise of Ramakrishna, these youngmen took the vow of monasticism and located their sanctuary at first at Baranagar, then to Alumbazar and finally to Belur. They became the nucleus of the Ramakrishna sect of monastic order. Two interesting episodes took place before this monastic group became well-known to the public. The above-mentioned Haramohan Mitra told the writer that after the demise of Ramakrishna, Pandit Bejoychandra Goswami tried to draw these young recluses within his fold. It seemed that he had cut off his connection with Sadharan Brahmo Samaj by that time and had formed a group of his own. But he failed in his attempt at seduction. It was said that he confessed that "but for this youngman Naren, I would have succeeded in drawing them to me". The writer's elder brother Mahendranath says that Pandit Goswami, then known as *Jatiababa,* used to come to Dr. Ramchandra's house. But he never came to Baranagar.

The second bit of news as once narrated by Swami Akhandananda and verified by another Swami, and also by Sri Mahendranath Datta, that the great leader Surendranath Banerjea approached these young monks to help him in national work. But the young monks refused to be drawn to politics. It was evident that political workers could not be found in those days, hence Surendranath had to look around for workers.

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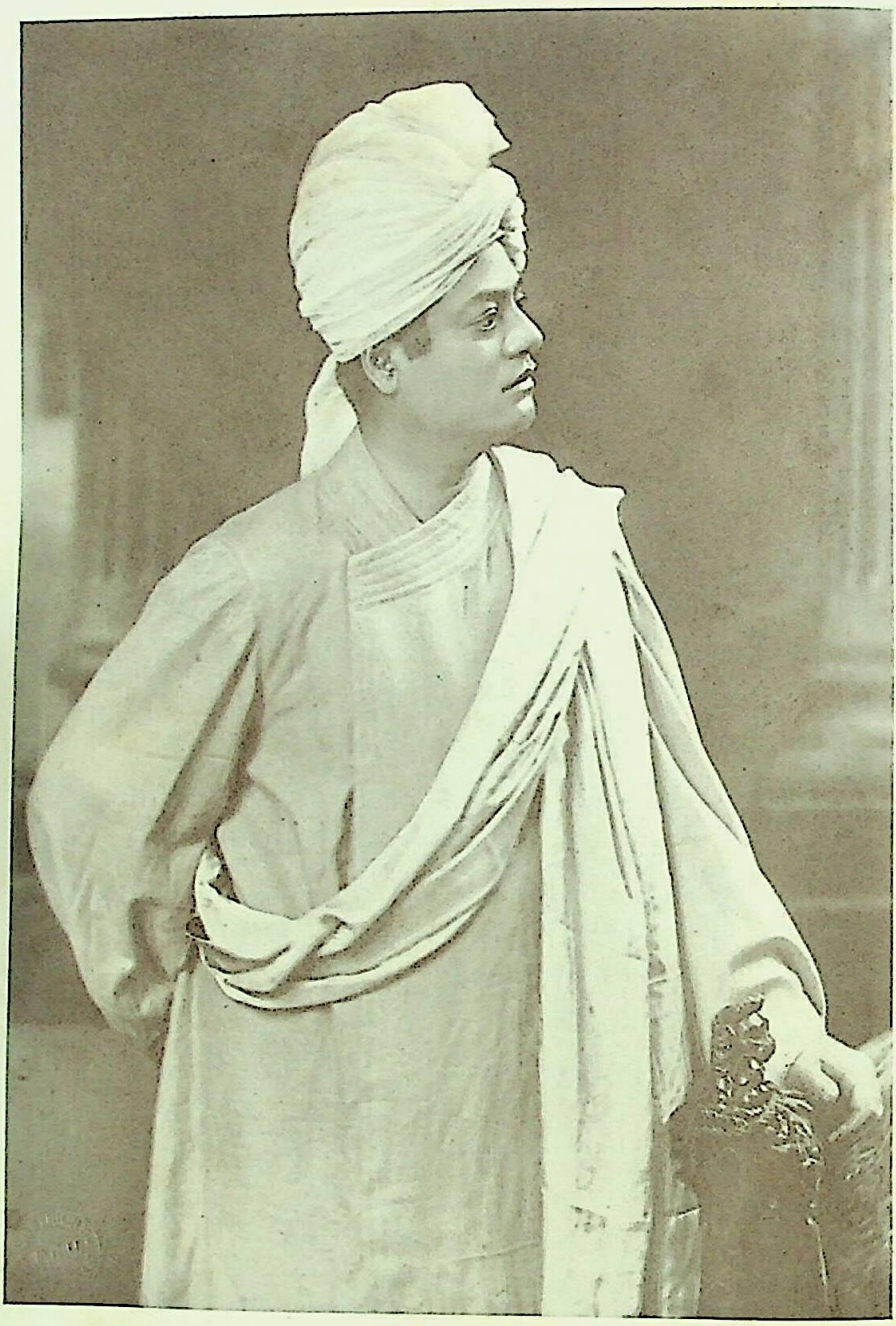

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA
Madras, February, 1897

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## VII

## JOURNEY ABROAD

Much has been written and said regarding Swami Vivekananda's representation of orthodox Hinduism in the Parliament of Religions held at Chicago in 1893 A. D. The Brahmanical priesthood raged and fumed against him as it is forbidden to a Hindu to cross the "Black water". The educated Hindus, amazingly ignorant of their own culture and religion, looked askance, and criticized him as deviating from the orthodox representation of *Sanatana dharma.* Strange it is, that some leading men of his own caste were up in arms against him. They vituperated him in the papers. They caricatured him in the Theatre. They criticized his interpretation as not in consonance with the orthodox interpretation. To these custodians of Hinduism, the stuff inculcated in their mind by the ignorant and interested priesthood is the true aspect of Hinduism.

The fact that a Hindu in a monk's garb went to represent Hinduism in a foreign country was undreamt of till then. The conservative and ignorant priesthood had taught the people, that Hinduism never crossed the "Black water" of the sea. Hinduism has always been confined to *Jambu dwipa.* Then comes the startling news that Swami Vivekananda was a Kayastha by caste. That was too much for his own castemen who traditionally pride themselves as the "servants of the Brahmans".[1] The fact of Swami Vivekananda being a representative of Brahmanical Hinduism, rubbed these pillars of reaction on the wrong way. Their ancestors started the "Dharma Sabha" to counteract the movement of Rammohan Roy. They may see with complacency a member of their caste changing his religion, but how can they tolerate a member of their own community to usurp the traditional

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1. Were these worthies rather "the servants of British Imperialism" which has been the historical truth?

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function of the priests whose servants they are! It is unthinkable that social adjustment sanctioned by neo-smriti of Navadwipa, be destroyed by the adventure of a member of their community. The power of the priestcraft must be upheld, that is the bounden duty of the Dakshin-rahri Kayasthas—the servants of the Brahmans! Hence, from the Press and the Theatre caricatures were made of him and vituperations were flung at him from day to day, from month to month for the defence of orthodoxy.

But dialectical contradictions work against each other. The interpenetration of opposites takes place. While the conservative bourgeoisie, backed by the hide-bound priesthood, was abusing Swami Vivekananda, the liberal bourgeoisie assembled at the Town Hall of Calcutta under the presidentship of a Brahman, and a titled person, to congratulate Swami Vivekananda for his work in the West in 1894. In answer to this address he writes, "Accept, sir, my most heartfelt gratitude for your appreciation of my insignificant services. I am thoroughly convinced that no nation can live by holding itself apart from the community of others..To my mind, the one great cause of the downfall and the degeneration of India was the building of a wall of custom.....Give and take is the law,.....Expansion is life, contraction is death.... we must mix, therefore, with all the races of the earth. And every Hindu that goes out to travel in foreign parts, renders more benefit to his country than hundreds of men who are bundles of superstitions and selfishness, whose one aim in life seems to be like that of the dog in the manger.....Do any deserve liberty who are not ready to give it to others? Let us calmly and in a manly fashion go to work, instead of dissipating our energy in unnecessary frettings and fumings..... The past was great no doubt, but I sincerely believe that the future will be more glorious still".[2]

This is the crux of the object of his mission to the West. This is the fitting saying of the "Beginner" of New India that since then has been unfolding itself. Again, when he came back to Calcutta in 1896-97, it was the liberal bourgeoisie that gave him a royal reception at the Sealdah Station and presented him with an

2. Works: Vol. IV, pp. 310-311.

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address at the compound of the late Raja Radhakanta Dev, and presided by a scion of his line.[3]

It is strange that no Hindu religious preacher has been so much under cross-fire of slander and depreciation as Swami Vivekananda. While, the conservatives were vituperating him at home, there was a strange medley of different sects abroad to malign him and to censure him for his supposed failings. He was charged of the crime of leading unorthodox life, of resorting to first class hotels and what not. Necessity makes strange bed-fellows! The truth is that Swami Vivekananda's emergence as the champion of orthodox Hinduism unsettled the vested interests of these groups. And who knows that there was no finger of Imperialism that be in India in the pie of this slandering propaganda! Indeed, when Swami Abhayananda, an American lady disciple of Swamiji, came to India, the British-owned "Pioneer Mail" of Allahabad regretted that an Occidental sitting at the feet of an Indian "only saddens the white".[4] Race-pride of imperialism is in jeopardy in this phenomenon.

It is not an impossibility that behind this orthodox masquerade, there had been some imperial manipulation. Keshabchandra's disgrace in latter life has been regarded by some as an illustration of it. The untimely marriage of Keshabchandra Sen's daughter with the Maharaja of Cooch-Behar which led to the lowering down of the former's prestige before the public, made the outside people to suspect some imperialist play in the matter. That is what the writer has heard from different persons in his early age. As Keshab was becoming a unique leader of the Indian intelligentsia, and as he was respected by some ruling princes, it was high time for the imperialist rulers to curb his influence. Hence, the tragic side of the marriage took place which cost Keshabchandra his popularity and the

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3. Among the many kinds of criticism that were levelled against Swamiji one was, that his mode of delivery was a "theatrical pose". The Bengalees are not yet used to American style of elocution. Swamiji got this training at Boston. It is being taught in the universities of the U. S. A. as well.

4. In Calcutta at the American Consulate at some party, Sir John Woodburns the then Lt. Governor of Bengal blamed a leading American lady disciple of Swamiji for mixing with an Indian!

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splitting up of his church. Here, the reader should not forget that in the name of Sanatanbad good many Hindus had been working since the introduction of the foreign rule in India to the detriment of Hindu Society. We have cited the plausible cases beforehand.

The worst part of the campaign of slander was that took place in Chicago. The interested groups overtly or covertly were up in arms against him. The Christian missionary body, as a part of Occidental imperialism, did not like to see the resurrection of the heathens of India. It is their great Elysian field of exploitation. Those who are *encourant* with world-politics, know the intimate connection between both the forces. Prof. Reinsch of Wisconsin University had admitted this connection.[5]

As a result of this combination, Swamiji had to suffer terribly. The detractors charged that as a sanyasi he used to resort to first class hotels. In this matter, the American Christian missionaries, inspite of their lip-service to Jesus Christ, had been monumental liars. They, in order to hide the black spot of their own society, hurled anathemas on the head of the poor, unknown "Hindu" who was forced to apply to first class hotels for lodging. The truth they did not tell; these disciples of Christ, these preachers of human brotherhood did not dare to tell the truth why Swami Vivekananda had to apply to the first class hotels for accomodation, though in many cases this was also refused! But one "cannot hide a candle under a bushel of hay" says the Christian Bible. The world knows today that there is such a thing as "color-prejudice" resulting in *color-bar* in the United States of America. A dark-skinned man as yet has got a very poor or no chance to lodge himself in a hotel or to eat in a decent restaurant run by the so-called "white men". In Swamiji's days the condition was still worse. The present-writer who has lived in America for six years knows it to his bitter cost. Hundreds of Indian students who have visited the U.S.A. know it bitterly. Even, after the

5. Vide: "World-politics". See also K. M. Panikkar, "Asia and Western Dominance", 1953.

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removal of the British rule from India, in 1948, a celebrated physician of Calcutta, who, later on, became the Chief Minister of the Province of West Bengal, found it out in a restaurant in a nearby place in Chicago where he was refused service.[6] Some Indian Maharaja who, while taking a luxurious apartment in a hotel with his retinue and being lionized by the notables, was refused service in a restaurant while he went there incognito! The thing cannot be denied. On the other hand, it is only the first class hotels which may accomodate an Oriental or a man with a dark-skin of non-Negro extraction, because, the colored gentlemen of America do not apply to such places for lodgement. This has also been the experiences of late Swami Abhedananda who narrated it to the writer in America. The writer knows cases where young Indians, just landed in the U.S.A., when looking for rooms, have been advised by the Americans to resort to first class hotels for temporary lodgement as there is color-bar in the country, hence it will be hard for them to get a room to sleep. Swami Vivekananda had to sleep on the street!

The Christian missionaries hid this fact from the Indian public as very few Indians used to visit that country in those days. Instead of telling the truth of their society, they vituperously attacked Swami Vivekananda for living in luxurious hotels and eating forbidden foods, as if the Christian missionaries are the custodians of Brahmanical orthodoxy! Again, some of the Brahmo Samajists joined in this chorus of slanders, as if they have suddenly turned *volte face* as Brahmanists! One laughs in his sleeves to hear these anathemas of the interested groups. Regarding the behaviour of this maligning Brahmo leader, the writer had a talk with Pandit Shivnath Sastri of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj. He said, "Yes, I have heard something of it. What a man cannot do for his self-interest!"

At Baltimore, a conservative place, he was refused admission in a hotel. Thus he writes to an American friend on 27th Oct. 1894, "You need not be sorry on account of the ill-treatment I received at the hands of a low hotel-keeper at Balti-

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6. The news came out in contemporary Indian papers.

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more. It was the fault of the Vrooman brothers. Why should they take me to a low hotel?"[7] Thus, it is manifest that Swamiji had no option but to apply to higher sorts of hotels for accomodation. Another illustration of the color-bar against him in the American hotels was when Mrs. Patterson, the wife of the latter-day American Consul-General at Calcutta, "befriended the Swami once, during the early days of his preachings in America, by taking him into her home when she heard with indignation that he was refused admittance in the hotels of the city due to his color."[8] Yet, knowing all these, the Christian missionaries tried to belittle him in the eyes of his countrymen, instead of denouncing their own social evil.

As regards the covert slanders and propagandas of others, these facts are too well-known to the friends of Swamiji.[9] Yet, Swami Vivekananda came triumphant out of these ordeals. He set the ball rolling for the awakening of race-consciousness of the Indo-Aryans and was the *Beginner* of the creation of New India that is in making.

Further, as an explanation to the charge of living unorthodox life, Swamiji writes from Paris to an Indian friend, "I am surprised that you take the missionaries' nonsense so seriously.....If the people of India want me to keep strictly to my Hindu diet, please tell them to send me a cook and money enough to keep him..... Do you mean to say I am born to live and die one of those caste-ridden, superstitious, merciless, hypocritical, atheistical coward, that you find only amongst the educated Hindus?"[10] In another place he said that he was never an orthodox nor a Pouranic Hindu to be judged by that standard.[11]

The importance of Swami Vivekananda as the representative of the Indo-Aryan Vedic religion has been dimly understood as yet. In ancient time there had been a tradition that the

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7. Works: Vol. VI, p. 244, Epistle L.; see also "The Life", vol. III, p. 326.
8. "The Life", vol. III, p. 226.
9. "The Life", vol. II, pp. 400-402.
10. Ibid., vol. II, p. 400.
11. Works: Vol. VI, p. 305.

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Greek philosopher Socrates met an Indian Brahman savant. Max Mueller is sure about it.[12] It is admitted by impartial European scholars that Pythagoras and Plato were imbued with Indian philosophy. The influence of Sankhya philosophy is clearly discernible in their teachings. At the time of Alexander, before he set out for conquest of the East, his Greek tutor asked to bring a *Brachmana* (Brahman) back with him.[13] At the time of the rule of the Ptolemies, an Indian had been the head of an Egyptian temple. This has been the latest finding of archaeological research in Egypt.[14] It is even said that several words of Sanskrit origin are also traced in Egyptian language.[15]

Then came the rule of the Maurya Emperor Asoka. In his inscriptions he says that he sent Buddhist missionaries to the Hellenistic countries of the Mediterranean coast. Thus, there are enough proofs that there have been brisk cultural interchange of ideas between classical India and the Mediterranean world. Again, since the great Asoka sent his son and daughter as missionaries to Ceylon and to the West, thousands of Indian Buddhist missionaries impelled by the exhortation of the Buddha: "Go ye oh Bhikshus! preach the doctrine glorious—for the welfare of many, for the happiness of many"—have left their mother shore for foreign lands.

These streams of missionaries and following their wake, the merchants and the colonists have gone to the west, east and north of Asia inculcating Indian religion of "peace and goodwill to men" and implanting her civilization wherever they went. Thus, the post-Mauryan Indians giving their religion and culture to new countries have transformed Asia into "Greater India".

This stream of foreign propaganda and colonization continued to flow out of India till northern India fell before the onslaught of the Turkish-Moslems. As the mother-tree fell down, the branches and the saplings implanted outside

12. Max Mueller: "Theosophy or Psychological Religion", pp. 53-54.
13. J. P. Mahaffy: "Greek Life and Thought", p. 48.
14. V. Gordon Childe: "What Happened in History", p. 239.
15. It is communicated to the writer by an Indian research scholar.



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Bharatvarsha also withered away. The people inside the country, dumb-founded by the catastrophe that befell them, and unable to ward it off, began to incrust themselves. Their priests had already made them forget the past. The histories (Puranas) presented to them were nothing but fantastic fables. Already in the mediaeval age, the priests anathematized against the study of *Mleccha* language. The followers of Brahmanism were cut off from outside where the Varnashram polity did not exist. Then came the catastrophe by land and by sea. The Indians became myopic. Thus closes the second cycle of the course of Indian civilization.

In the age that followed the foreign conquest, the Indians being harrowed at home and as mentioned beforehand, being chased overseas by the Arabs, had to circumscribe themselves within the boundaries of their own country. Later on, this habit acquired the force of revealed injunction. In this way, the Hindu, forgetful of his past and bewailing his present lot and the future being blank to him, was comforting himself that it is his law of Karma and he must be shut up as required by his religion.

Thus in this long and dreary darkness of slavery and persecution, the Indo-Aryans called 'Hindus'[16] since the days of their slavery, remained stupefied by being oblivious of the past and annihilation staring them on their face. But dialectics works its way. While the contradictions between foreign fanaticism and Indian bigotry were clashing each other, an attempt at synthesis was being made. As a result arose Kabir, the son of a Moslem weaver, and later on Nanak. Guru Nanak founded a sect based on monotheistic cult. The fact of his life that is important in the context of our discussion here is, that Guru Nanak is narrated in the "Guru Granth Saheb" to have travelled outside India. It is said that he visited Bagdad where he had a discussion with a Pir who said, there are seven Heavens (*Akasa*) and seven Hells (*Patal*). But the Guru gave the rejoinder that there are *lakh* Heavens and *lakh* Hells.

16. It seems that after the Turkish conquest, the word got an opprobrious designation in Persian.

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This means that instead of subscribing to a narrow view of religious ideology, he saw infinity around him. Hence, he gave a liberal view of religious tenets. But Guru Nanak is regarded by Brahmanical orthodoxy as a sectary. Hence his travels abroad did not affect the vast orthodox people then having ossified themselves as members of orthodox "Hindu" society. Later on, in the early part of the nineteenth century, Rammohan Roy visited England and France. But his was a political mission undertaken on behalf of the titular Mughal Emperor. Again, Keshabchandra Sen visited England. But he preached sectarianism. It is said that half of London went to hear him, but he talked of Christ!

Much later, as a bolt from the blue, flashed the news in India that an orange-robed Hindu monk was representing orthodox Hinduism in the Parliament of Religions holding its session in Chicago in 1893! Such a news, though pleasing to liberal bourgeoisie, was a sledge-hammer to orthodoxy and to those who were masquerading as the expounders of Hinduism. But Swami Vivekananda crossed the Rubicon of orthodoxy and enlarged the cultural horizon of the Indians. The Indians regained their spiritual empire. So long, India had been the playground of so many religious vagaries and foreign charlatanisms. All of them have formed vested interests in India. But here comes a man who in the name of undiluted Vedic religion, challenges the priestly orthodoxy as well as the teachers of foreign religion. Here rises a man who does not speak in the tone of apology like the reformers or try to give a new interpretation of the Veda to fit his ideal. He takes the "anthropological religion"[17] of the Indo-Aryans as it is. He wants to re-establish the Sruti and not the Smriti and latterly-grown religious ideas. To use Panikkar's words, Swamiji desired, "to rejuvenate Hindu society and to give Hinduism a social purpose".[18] This confounded the orthodox custodians of Hindu religion. His orthodoxy was free from priest-craft

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17. Regarding the meaning of the term see Auguste Comte and F. Max Mueller.
18. K. M. Panikkar: Op. cit., p. 325.

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and mediaeval accretions. This disturbed the mental equilibrium of those who posed themselves as the champions of orthodoxy. The political import of this sudden emergence of the champion of orthodoxy was bewildering to everybody. The placid complacency of national life enjoined by the neo-smriti legislations was disturbed by this emergence. Forgotten are the days when Kaundiniya Rishi established a colony and a kingdom in Transgangetic Valley of South-eastern Asia. Gone are the days when Kambu Rishi sailed eastward on a ship and arrived at the Transgangetic Valley and after disembarking stuck the spear which Asvathama, the epic hero, is supposed to have given him, and planted a colony and a kingdom which still bears his name (corrupted as "Cambodia" by the Europeans). Again, even a bit of historical news is put into oblivion that the Sailendra monarch of modern Indonesia, a scion of Lunar dynasty, whom emperor Devapaladeva of Gaud at his request conferred five villages in Budhgaya and in Patna area for building shelter houses for the Buddhist pilgrims from his domains.[19]

Today, we feel proud of the Mauryan and Gupta empires, but we do not evaluate the historical importance of the Sailendra empire founded by the Indians beyond the sea which extended from Java to the Phillipines. Today, the Occidental research scholars, the archæologists and the anthropologists, have discovered that Greater India extended from Khotan in the north to Java in the south, East Africa in the west to the Phillipines in the east. Even they have found out that there were Indian colonies in Arabia as well. But all these however have been put into oblivion. Now these have become the subject-matter of archaeological research. The Hindus have been absolutely ignorant of all these achievements of their ancestors till a decade ago, the result of the researches began to percolate in India through the second hand efforts of the Indian scholars.

When the mind of the Hindus had been in such somnolent

19. Ind., vol. XVII, No. 17. The Nalanda Copper Plate of Devapaladeva.

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stupor, suddenly came the clarion call of a young Hindu monk—arise, awake, be proud of the religion of your ancestors and their culture. "Hinduism", in the words of a foreign friend of India, "has again become aggressive".[20] This is the whole message of Swami Vivekananda in a nut-shell. The Hindus as "Hindus" need not be ashamed of themselves, there need be no apology for their religion and culture. If they are proud of their past, their future is still more glorious.

The mission of Swami Vivekananda was to arouse the sleeping leviathan, that is, Indian society. He clearly stated that he had no respect for those who are "black as chimney sweep, calling themselves Europeans".[21] To him, India must be saved by her own people. He exhorted to raise the downtrodden masses who are the store-house of energy to shape India to a new destiny. This plan was in his mind before he left India. His biographers narrate the following incident: while on the eve of his departure from Bombay, unexpectedly he met two of his *Gurubhais* at Abu Road Station. He told them with pathetic passion of the urge generated by the suffering of India that was forcing him to go to the West. He gave the argument as thus: "I have now travelled all over India..... But alas, it was agony to me, my brothers, to see with my own eyes the terrible poverty and misery of the masses, and I could not restrain my tears! It is now my firm conviction that it is futile to preach religion amongst them without first trying to remove their poverty and their sufferings. It is for this reason, to find more means for the salvation of the poor of India, that I am now going to America".[22] During this interview he said to one of them: "Haribhai, I cannot understand your so-called religion".[23] Regarding this passion for the salvation of the downtrodden masses of India, Swami Turiyananda said to his listeners: "Do you think that these tears of blood were shed in vain? No! Each one of those tears, shed for his country, every inflamed whisper of his

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20. Vide Sister Nivedita: "Aggressive Hinduism".
21. Works: Vol. VI, p. 302.
22-23. Quoted by Romain Rolland; pp. 33-34.

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mighty heart will give birth to troops of heroes, who will shake the world with their thoughts and their deeds".[24] Swami Turiyananda's prophecy did not falsify as latter-day Indian history testifies. The prophetic cry of Swamiji: "Arise, awake"—fructified itself. The cry was heeded and the somnolent Indo-Aryan is manifesting his own resurrection in every sphere of life. The upshot of this prophetic call had been to arouse the race-consciousness of the Indian people who are "Aryas" to him. For this reason, and in order to dispel the hypnotism of foreign-introduced education he ransacked anthropology, sociology, history, and the past culture of his country to find the norm which will be the lever to arouse the sleeping leviathan. There was no political consciousness in that time in India. The Indian National Congress was in its infancy, yet he hoped much from it as is expressed in his dialogue. The only norm according to him was religion. The Indian is awfully susceptible to it. Here he wanted to strike in order to arouse the somnolent lion called *Bharat* by dispelling its ignorance about itself.

Like the story said to be in some Sanskrit text, a lion-cub who forgot his own nature, was aroused to his consciousness by another grown up lion. Hence, when a pious attempt was being made to make India a second England, arose the young monk imbued with the best culture of the West and of his own country, to awaken his fellow-countrymen. His sole mission to the West was to do service to his country, because till today, the foreign country is the only sounding board to awaken the Indians to their senses.

For this reason, the young monk crossed the "Black water" and in his life time reaped abuses from the hands of his conservative fellow-countrymen and persecution from the side of the vested interests. The Indians did not understand the import of this adventure on the part of this youngman. The dialectics of materialistic history of India impelled him to go abroad. Like Videha Madhava of Satapatha Brahmana, and like Kambu Rishi of classical days, Swami

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24. Quoted by Romain Rolland: pp. 33-34.

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Vivekananda set out to conquer foreign lands for his country. This has been no political conquest in any sense, but a moral conquest in every sense.

While the foreigners were trying to denationalize India, and the Indians were *kowtowing* to the foreign rulers who were regarded as the white Brahmans hence the "divinities on earth" (Bhudeva) in *Kaliyuga,* when the progressive political bodies were humbly petitioning to the Government to redress their grievances, when England and the life of her people were regarded as celestial, and the Indians from their childhood were taught to regard that life as such, when the dream of "Cedered Lebanon" (vide "Captive Lady"), when the Indians poet by becoming Christian in order to be Europeanized forgot to speak words of his mother-tongue properly, and being insouciant of the rich literature of his own country, did not see any beauty in the Himalayan scenery but sang of "Cedered Lebanon" (vide "Captive Lady"), when the Indians were ridiculed as a race of pigmies led away by a handful of Britishers,[25] when the Indians themselves were pessimist about the future independant existence of their own, when Indo-Aryan religious experiences were held in ridicule, there burst forth a youngman born in Calcutta to uphold all that is Hindu in an international religious gathering dominated by orthodox Christians. There has been a historical necessity for the appearance of Swami Vivekananda at this juncture. It is strange concatenation of circumstances that led this

25. During the boyhood of the writer, a story used to be circulated in Calcutta that the Iron-Chancellor of Germany, Bismark, was surprised in seeing Romeshchandra Datta to be a tall man with civilized aspect like him and exclaimed the above-mentioned remark.

Again, in 1917, the American ex-Consul-General of Stuttgart told the writer and his friends in Stockholm, that before the war, there was a dinner-party given in honor of the Kaiser at the American Embassy at Berlin. After dinner, when the Kaiser and the narrator were sipping brandy, the Kaiser expressed his views about drinking. But the narrator of the story being an Irishman was orthodox in this matter. He gave the rejoinder, "In that case, Your Majesty, the 300 millions of Hindus would not have been led by a handful of wine-bibbing Englishmen". The narrator related that hearing this remark, the Kaiser burst out into a roar of laughter.

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youngman to thunder in the name of Hinduism in the U.S.A. the land of race-prejudice and color-bar and Christian fanaticism. It is manifest from his biography and other records that it was a liberal and far-seeing Pandit at Porbunder who advised him to go to the West, where his thought would be better understood than in his own country: "Go and take it by storm, and then return"![26] How correct has been the evaluation of the mentality of his own countrymen by this unprejudiced Pandit, and what a contrast it is with the Pandits whose hymns of hatred extended beyond his grave! Has there been any force of economic interpretation of history behind the chorus of abuses hurled by the Bengal Pandits and their "servants" who pose in Bengal as the custodians of Brahmanism?

By scanning the biography and other records one finds that some liberal ruling princes and the liberal bourgeoisie of Madras arranged for the departure of Swamiji to the West. What was the motive behind this move on their behalf? Perhaps to ward off the slanderous attacks of the foreigners and their supporters at home. These liberal-minded nobles and bourgeoisie wanted him to represent Hinduism abroad as that was the sounding-board for Indian ears. Actuated by Hindu patriotism and the love of the country, they must have done it. All honor to them, they were the harbingers of New India that is evolving. It is they who adumberated the future dimly. Indo-Aryan consciousness had been aroused in them by coming in touch with the wandering Swami. Perhaps Swami Vivekananda had political talks with some of these princes as delineated beforehand in the preface. *A propos* this attitude of mind of some of the Indian notables interesting themselves in him, the writer recalls the story narrated to him by Basukaka of Chitrasala Press of Poona, at the Gauhati Session of the Indian National Congress, 1925. Basukaka told the writer, that while Swamiji was living at B. G. Tilak's place as his guest, he was present at the time of conversation between the both. Basukaka reported to the writer that it was

26. Vide: "The Life", vol. II, p. 169.

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agreed that while Tilak would work for Nationalism in the political field, Swami Vivekananda would work for Nationalism in the religious field. While Tilak's sounding-board was the Indian National Congress, Swamiji's sounding-board was religion. Of course, to arouse the masses, Tilak tried his hands at religious movements viz., "Ganapati Utsab", "Shivaji Utsab". It was at the celebration of Shivaji Utsab that Tilak uttered the ever memorable historic truth: "God has not given India to the *Mlecchas* by a deed of grant written in a copper plate". This cost Tilak a rigorous imprisonment in jail for a certain period. But how many Indians understood the import of this saying at that time!

Both worked for the resurrection of the Indo-Aryan race. Hence, both of them had to take Indo-Aryan religion as it is. Tilak, apart from his books called "Oreon" and the "Arctic Home in the Vedas" which were nothing but patriotic defence of the age of the Veda from the criticism of the imperialistic Indologists, made a new annotation of the Bhagavatagita to suit the exigency of the time. Swami Vivekananda worked in the religious field. He tried to arouse the race-consciousness of the people. He drew their attention to their heritage of the past.

The primary object of Swami Vivekananda was Nationalism. To arouse the sleeping Lion of India and to put it on its proper pedestal was his life's mission.[27] His national ideal was the ideal of Bankimchandra Chattopadhyaya as depicted in the revolutionary novel *Ananda Math*. Future Mother India, to both of them was Durga, the goddess with resplendent face, wearing all sorts of weapons of force in her hands, and in the left hand seizing the hair of the Asura, her enemy, and in the right hand assuring all not to be afraid (*Baravaya*). This ideal, though an allegorical one, enthused the revolu-

27. How different is the angle of vision between a nationalist Hindu mind and that of a Moslem Pan-Islamist, is evinced in the *Morsiya* poem of M. Iqbal on Sicily. There he said that he has heard from old men that the Lion of Hedjaj will waken again. But the Moslem grandson of a Brahman could not dream of the reawakening of the Indian Lion!

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tionaries of subsequent period. And as the revolutionaries of the Ananda Math sang "Bande Mataram" in honor of Mother India, the subsequent nationalists of all shades of opinion sang it and suffered for it, till it became the alternative national anthem of the Indian Republic. Of course, Swami Vivekananda did not delineate the form of future India concretely as this was not in his line. Yet he always spoke of glorious future India the pedestal of which will be Indo-Aryan culture. In connection with the word "mother" as applied to India, the writer narrates the following fact here.

The nationalists of Bengal organized "Shivaji Utsab" in Calcutta in 1901. The idea was to get acquainted with the patriotic heroes of each province. But nobody dared to become the president of the public function. They were mortally afraid of the lynx-eyed watch of the Government. At last, Sureshchandra Samajpati, the grand-son of Pandit Iswarchandra Vidyasagar and a *litterateur* sent his younger brother Jyotish to Belur Math to talk with Swamiji about the difficulty and to request him to accept the presidentship of the utsav function. Swamiji hearing everything began to weep and said, *"Beti* demands sacrifice. Go to Narendranath Sen, the editor of the "Indian Mirror", and request him in my name to accept the presidentship. If nobody accepts it then I myself will be the president of the function".

Here the allusion is that the goddess Sakti wants sacrifice of life in her worship, and "beti" means daughter, a term of endearment applied to mother or to a younger woman. The writer heard it from Sureshchandra Samajpati himself on the occasion of the fourth and last Shivaji Utsav presided by B. G. Tilak in 1906 at Calcutta.

Swami Vivekananda came to America in 1893 and took it by storm as desired by the Pandit of Porbunder. Now, the question is what was his achievement *vis-a-vis* India. It is not a fact that America became converted to orthodox Hinduism and the life of the converts are being regulated by the neo-smritis written during foreign rule! Lots of tomfoolaries began to be circulated among the credulous Ramakrishnaites

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of Bengal in this matter. But to assure the credulous Hindus it must be bluntly told here, that the United States of America is a plutocratic, chauvinist Christian Country. Instead of dabbling in necromancies of spiritualism, mahatma business of the Theosophists, Jogic-feats and charlatanisms of various sorts, to-day, the U.S.A. is busying itself with nuclear researches, and piling Atomic and Hydrogen bombs. The U.S.A. is now-a-days extending her long arms all over the world for economic and political strangle-hold in her favor. The future of world history will only bear testimony to the result.

But what the writer has heard and seen are related here. A Ceylonese businessman who went to the U.S.A. in 1893, narrated his experience in the following words: "Once, in the City of Chicago he and two of his fellow-countrymen boarded a tram car. But one of them was *kicked* down by the conductor for having darker complexion than theirs. But as the result of the speeches of Swami Vivekananda and Mr. Dharmapala, the situation has improved a little bit since then."

But it must be noticed that common people never heard or cared for the Oriental teachers. Color-prejudice has got its basis intact. Its basis lies in economics. It is most virulant with the European immirgrants who come from depressed classes. But as the result of the activities of the disciples of Ramakrishna and other Orientals a small circle grew in big towns who were sympathetic to the Hindus and were liberal in social dealings with the Hindus.[28] Mrs. Edith Swanander, who was called by Swamiji as "mother" used to say, that doctors, lawyers and professors used to attend the classes of Swami Vivekananda. They wanted to understand the Indian view of life. Prof. Lester. F. Ward, the noted scientist and sociologist, told the post-graduate class at the Brown University in 1913, that, he attended the whole course of lectures of Swami Vivekananda. But his opinion was that "the Oriental view of life is pessimistic, kill the flesh is the

28. All Indians are called "Hindus" in contradistinction with the Amerindians.

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Oriental motto."[29] Yet in all the big Universities of the U.S.A. Sanskrit and course on Indian philosophy are being taught. Even an orthodox thinker Dr. C. G. Shaw, the writer's professor of philosophy at the New York University, opined, that if Aryan thought through Greek philosophy could influence Christianity in ancient time, then, why Christianity should not be influenced by Aryan thought again through Indian Vedanta, especially as many in Europe and in America are accepting it.[30] But the fact is that till 1914, only a small coterie of American intelligentsia cared for India. The Americans are as chauvinist as ever. But since independence it is said that orthodox pastors are inviting the Swamies of the Vedanta centers to speak from their pulpit. Miss Phillips of New York, an old friend of Swami Vivekananda, once told the writer, that before the advent of Swamiji, the Christian missionaries used to circulate a picture depicting crocodiles lying on the banks of river Hugly with mouths wide open, waiting to gobble up a Hindu baby to be thrown in their mouth by the dark-skinned mother. Of course, the baby used to be painted white, just to draw sympathy of the white Americans! These have been stopped as the result of Swamiji's propaganda.

It must be said here, that various nefarious propaganda used to be made by the Christian missionaries against Hinduism and the Indian people to misdirect the American mind from the rising tide of freedom movement that was in full swing in the days when the writer was there. Again, paid Indians were engaged to malign the Hindus and India. This had been the writer's experience till 1914 when he left that country.

As regards the national aspect of India, those who sympathised with the Indian cause of freedom in latter days, did it without being Vedantists. One thing must not be forgotten here. The Young Indian students who went to the U.S.A. since 1907 helped a good deal in the matter of

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29. The writer was in the class at that time.
30. Charles Grey Shaw: Vide "Precints of Religion."

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making India known to the American public. Till 1920, most of these Indians were self-supporting students. As such, they mixed with every phase of American life. Fan-like they spread all over the Universities of the U.S.A. They studied in the Universities and preached the cause of India everywhere.

But the sore lay in the slavery of India. No amount of Vedantic preaching or "Jogi-ism" could raise the estimation of India in the mind of American people.[31] The writer heard a story at Calcutta in his younger days from the friends of Swami Vivekananda who narrated to them the following incident: Once in New York, an old Roman Catholic priest met him. He said, "You come from the East and it is written in our Scripture, that light shall come from the East (Ex Oriente Lux). But go back home, free your country and then we shall hear you." The same story has been repeated by Bepinchandra Pal in his writings and speeches. He said, that on his arriving at New York, he found a Roman Catholic priest of typical John Bull appearance, waiting at the Hotel to meet him. When they met, after warmly shaking hand he said, "You come from the East. It is written in our Scripture that light comes from the East. We need you but nobody shall hear you at present. Go back home, be Peter the Hermit of India, and after freedom, when you shall be able to look horizontally on our eyes, then we shall hear you." Perhaps the interviewer in both the cases was the same person. This significant saying had been the crux of the Indian situation in America, indeed, in every independent country. The enslavement of the Indian people had been a puzzle with good many thinking men of the world.

We cannot follow for long the activities of Swami Vivekananda in the West in our disquisition here. Indeed, he

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31. Once, the writer was present in a class held at the Vedanta Society in 1910. A lady told the Secretary, that whenever she talks with the Americans about Vedanta, they retort: "How can we accept the religion of those people who are being kept under the thumb of a handful of Englishmen!"

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created friends of the Indian people wherever he went. But he has acknowledged that he had better success in London than in America. Some of the British-Indian officials on leave attended his lectures. In a letter from London dated 18th November, 1895, he thus reports to his friend in Calcutta: "In England my work is really splendid. I am astonished myself at it. The English people do not talk much in the newspapers, but they work silently. I am sure of more work in England than in America. Bands and bands come and I have no room for so many; so they squat on the floor, ladies and all. I tell them to imagine that they are under the sky of India, under a spreading banyan, and they like the idea."[32]

Again, as regards his work in England he expressed the following view to the representative of "The Hindu," Madras, in Feb. 1897: "The Chicago Parliament was a tremendous success for India and Indian thought. It helped on the tide of Vedanta, which is flooding the world." Then the representative asked regarding the prospect of his mission in England, he answered, "There is every prospect. Before many years elapse, a vast majority of the English people will be Vedantins. There is a greater prospect of this in England than there is in America. In England, there was not one missionary or anybody who said anything against me; not one who tried to scandalize me. To my astonishment, many of my friends belong to the Church of England."[33] But like the tortoise after the heels of Achilles, the fact of bondage was a hindrance to the proper estimation of Indian Culture. Indeed, lots of British-Indian officials were sympathetic to Indian philosophy and religion, but they were members of the ruling class in India. That was never lost sight of by them.

Again, in an interview with the representative of "India," London, in 1896, the following dialogue took place: "And is India finally to conquer her conquerors?" "Yes, in the world

32. Works: vol. V, p. 76.
33. Ibid., pp. 139-142.

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of ideas. England has the sword, the material world, as our Mohammedan conquerors had before her. Yet Akbar the Great became practically a Hindu; educated Mohammedans, the Sufis, are hardly to be distinguished from the Hindus..... Their thought has become permeated by ours." "So that is the fate you foresee for the lordly Sahib? Just at this moment he seems to be a long way off it." "No, it is not so remote as you imply."[34]

Here it must be noted that before Swami Vivekananda, Karl Marx had the similar kind of illusion about English mentality. He hoped that England will be the first socialist country in the world. But the expectations of both of these greatmen have not materialized as yet. Because, the economic interpretation of history stood on the way. The slaves and the downtrodden people of the Roman Empire first accepted Christianity. The aristocracy and the Caesar bowed to the inevitable after a very long time. As long as the English remain an exploiting class, how can they accept the ideas or religion of the exploited. The Englishman in India, be he a worker from the English Labor Party or an official, or a religious preacher, had been the member of the exploiting and ruling class. He never forgot that stand.

With this excursus about Swamiji's experiences in foreign country, we trace our steps homewards to estimate his work there. His voice emanating from the sounding-board of the West, had its resonance in India. India's self-consciousness and self-assertion began to grow. So long, the reformers dangled a Franckenstein of conditional pessimism before the people. Unless and until the Hindus reform themselves with their recipe, there is no hope for them in the future. But, all the aggressive national movements leading to the final emancipation of the country from foreign yoke, dates after the clarion-call of Swami Vivekananda. Romain Rolland, a member of a great and independent country and having unprejudiced vision has noticed it. Young India hearkened his call to racial awakening. He became the Prophet of Young India.

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34. Ibid., pp. 124-125.

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In contrast with the patriotic call of Swami Vivekananda, and his attempt at the establishment of India's prestige before the American people, we recall a certain incident of a die-hard social reformer of Calcutta, in 1911. An old professor, a stalwart of the Brahmo Samaj, visited the U.S.A. In the course of his tour he gave a lecture in Boston in Emerson Hall, addressing the Americans, that "You people are civilizing us!" This sent a flutter among the Young Indian students in the U.S.A. It hurts their national feeling as they were fighting tooth and nail for their treatment as a civilized people in that country. And this utterance came out from the mouth of a big man of Calcutta after the Swadeshi Movement has passed over and when India was in the throes of a revolutionary movement, and Young Indians, both at home and abroad, are giving their lives on the gallows for the cause of freedom of the country. Who is reactionary?—The social reformer dangling the skeleton of social bogey over the heads of the benighted Indians, or, the patriot-prophet Swami Vivekananda whose call was being responded by the youngmen? Wherein lies the miracle of change in a young student of Bengal about whom the Viceroy Minto said, "What makes the Bengalee student with Gita on one hand and bomb on the other, turn into a fanatical Ghazi?" A psycho-analytical investigation will find that out. The psychology of appealing to the race-consciousness, and to the glorious achievement of their ancestors changed the world-view of the Young Indians. Truly, while discussing the psychology of the Swadeshi Movement in Bengal, Ramsay Macdonald has said: "It was the resuscitation of the Aryan in the Hindu."[35] Indeed, so long India has been regarded as the land of rope-trick, lifting of flower-pot from the ground by magic, belief in spooks and goblins, and what not. Interested Occidentals have interpreted Hindu culture and religion in that way. New India has never been interpreted in America. But with the achievement of independence things are changing. To-day, "India is big news" in the American

35. "Awakening of India," 1910.

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papers, says Mr. Ronald E. Walsley, the professor of Journalism of Syracuse University who in an article in the "Hindusthan Standard" of 25th October 1953, gives a long list of papers that favorably deal with India. Among other things he says, "American editors are in general eager for good copy about India. By 'good copy' most of them definitely do not mean the usual hokum about snake-charmers, the disappearing rope-trick, and walking on beds of hot coals. Whatever is being published now may not be enough to bring about a still better understanding of India in America. But it will help. We are making progress. The interest is here and growing." This is the boon of independence. The net result can be summed up in the words of the Indian diplomat Panikkar, that "By the beginning of the twentieth century, Hinduism after its astonishing recovery during the preceding fifty years, was already on the offensive. Christian missionary activity no longer frightened the leaders of Hinduism, and they were in a limited measure prepared to carry on the campaign into the enemy's camp. Hindu religious leaders had begun to appear even in America, where the Ramakrishna Mission had established a few centres." Thus, the Race-Capacity of the Indo-Aryan people is again on its ascendant peak. And this is the import of the achievement of Swami Vivekananda.



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## VIII

# SWAMI VIVEKANANDA : NATIONAL VIEWS

Narendranath though had left the house and travelled all over India as a sadhu, yet not much is known of his wanderings. He was enriching himself by his religious studies and devotions and observing the country. Thus he was preparing himself for his future life-work. It is not in the purview of our study to deal with his religious experiences and teachings as they are to be found in books whose number is a legion, we will only restrict ourselves to the study of his life's actions that pertain to India and her future.

At the outset, it must be told that Swami Vivekananda—that was the name by which Narendranath was known since he appeared in the Parliament of Religions held at Chicago in 1896—was a hundred per cent Indian. "Indiaism" was his religion; he has repeatedly expressed it. To a nationalist of pre-independence days, the sense of the term was clear, as many of them expressed themselves to be of that "creed".

The question is, that, what made him go to America? He has himself answered that question. The inward urge of expansion of India, dialectically developed in the mind of the bourgeoisie, forced him to visit America. The ancient *Charaiveti* policy expressed itself through the young Indian who is happily acquainted with ancient Indian lores and modern education. It is said that in his younger days when he asked Herbert Spencer to grant permission to translate his book on "Education" in Bengalee, the savant was surprised in reading the acumen of the letter. Renascent India is ripe for such an action. The days of priestcraft is past. If in the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Indian bourgeoisie is beginning to awaken and dialectically has evolved Rammohan Roy as its protagonist, in the latter part of the same century, the bougeoisie as we have seen already has become militant. There is an urge in the sub-conscious mind to challenge

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British imperial bourgeoisie in every sphere of life. The Indians are already manifesting it in every department of their life. In the north, Swami Dayananda has given a big shake up to Hindu priestcraft and has shown a militant attitude towards Islam and Christianity. It is said that Swami Dayananda wanted to visit Europe to preach Vedic religion. But he met premature death. Indian expansionism outside the country was deferred for the time being. But it was left to a youngman to fulfil it in his own way in the last decade of the nineteenth century.

From Rammohan Roy to Vivekananda is a far cry. But the period intervening their appearances cinematographed the development of bourgeois India of the nineteenth century. In this century was laid the foundation of New India that was born in the middle of the twentieth century. The dialectics of Historical-Materialism have produced these spiritual giants thrusting India more and more towards the goal of synthesis. It has been the period of intellectual and spiritual wrestling. The Indo-Aryan mind is getting wide awake. The urge for expansion by breaking the bond of stagnation, and to lead a new life was uppermost in the mind of bourgeois India. Priestly bond was gone, but British Imperialism hindered the process of expansion.

It is a known fact in sociology that revolution first takes place in the ideal plane, then it bursts forth in the material plane. Such a process was going on in India since Rammohan Roy. The ferment originating in the ideal plane has dialectically thrown off Rammohan, Debendranath, Keshubchandra, Dayananda, Ramakrishna, Syed Ahmed, Ranade, Vivekananda, Aurobinda, Gandhi and others. The dialectical ideas are jostling against each other, again, the opposites are interpenetrating each other. Hence, all these great men and their works, though in a certain extent dialectically negativating each other, yet have been helpful for the further evolution of New India. It is only an *ignoramus* or a sectarian bigot that finds quarrels and negative results in this process. "Like the pearls in a string," as the old Sanskrit adage says, all the activities of young India are leading towards the great negation of negation—

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new resurgent and expansive India. The ferment created by Swami Vivekananda in the intellectual plane, bursts forth after his death in Bengal and later spreading everywhere as the "Revolutionary Movement," led by another great man, in a certain sense his successor—Aurobinda Ghose[1]. It is said that Swamiji, after his return from the West second time, told a youngman[2] who visited him at Belur, that "what India needs to-day is bomb". He uttered it before his demise in 1902. And in 1908 bomb made its appearance in Bengal.[3] Romain Rolland the French biographer of Swami Vivekananda has noticed the significance of his preachings.[4] He says, "The Indian nationalist movement smouldered for a long time until Vivekananda's breath blew the ashes into flame and erupted violently three years after his death in 1905."[5] Thus according to him, "Vivekananda's Neo-Vedantism,..... spread like burning alcohol in the veins of his intoxicated nation."[6] Further Rolland says, "It is an undoubted fact that the Neo-Vedantism of Vivekananda materially contributed to this evolution.[7] Lajpat Rai attributes to him the honor of creating a new spirit of national tolerance, so that since his death Indian patriots have gradually freed themselves from their ancient prejudices of caste and family."[8] Here, Rolland in a footnote adds that as communicated to him by the Ramakrishna Mission that Gandhi in a lecture at the lawn of the Belur Math acknowledged, that "the reading of Vivekananda's books had increased his patriotism."[9] Thus, all the militant

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1. R. Rolland calls him, "the real intellectual heir of Vivekananda": "Prophets of the New India", p. 499.
2. Late Prof. Kamakshya Mitra vide writer's book, "Unpublished Political History" (in Bengalee).
3. Alipur Bomb Case in which Aurobinda was implicated.
4. "The Life of Swami Vivekananda" by R. Rolland, p. 125.
5. R. Rolland: "Prophets of the New India", Cassel Co., London 1930, p. 497. See also Lajpat Rai: "Young India, the Nationalist Movement", New York, 1917.
6. Ibid. Ditto, p. 501.
7. The writer.
8. R. Rolland: "Prophets of the New India", pp. 501-502.
9. Ibid., Op. cit. pp. 501-502. Gandhi addressed the concourse which gathered at Belur on the occasion of Ramakrishna birth-day festival.

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nationalist movements culminating in Gandhiji's movement for independence of India, were launched after Swamiji's thundering roar, "arise, awake."

It is a truism to say that there is a correlation between Swamiji's appeals to his young countrymen and the intensity of revolutionary urge in the mind of the youngmen of later generation. Since the foundation of the Revolutionary Party in Bengal, in which Swamiji's British disciple Sister Nivedita took at first an active part and was a member of the Executive Committee, his works, along with the writings and life of Mazzini, as well as the life of Garibaldi, in Bengalee, were the mainspring of inspiration to the youthful mind of India. In every gymnasium i.e., exercise-club of the Revolutionary Party of Bengal, his work entitled, "From Colombo to Almorah" was read. From 1902 to 1930 there was no better seller in the market than Swamiji's books. His saying, "Heaven is nearer through foot-ball than through Geeta. We want men of strong biceps" inspired the youngmen. In answer to a query of the writer the well-known revolutionary leader, Dr. Jadugopal Mukherjee, informs the following facts to the writer in his letter dated 31.8.53: "Directly or indirectly the influence of Swamiji was great." Then he mentioned the names of well-known men who in latter days became great leaders of nationalist and revolutionary movements, who used to visit Swamiji in their younger days. These men by getting direct inspiration from Swamiji, spread the ideas amongst their fellow-countrymen. Further, he says, "By not getting revolutionary literature within our reach, we read the 'Letters of Swamiji', 'The dialogue between master and disciple' by Saratchandra Chakravarty, his lectures, 'From Colombo to Almorah' which used to kindle fire in the heart. The debt to that patriot-saint is irredeemable. With what forceful language he preached *Samyabad* (Egalitarianism). His *Don't touchism* became in later age the 'untouchability' of Mahatmaji. Swamiji for a long time supplied spiritual food to the revolutionaries. Even to-day we say, 'Victory to Swamiji Maharaj'. His ideal of self-less work and example turned revolutionary movement into gold.

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In the matter of intellectual leadership, the place of Rammohan Roy is very high in history. But the petition of *Colonization* scheme, that he and Dwarkanath Tagore and others sent to the British Government after calling a meeting at the Town Hall, has been anything but savoury. They wanted the British to live permanently here.[10] This gives rise to a strong criticism against him. We did not find much influence of his reflecting on the revolutionaries. Then comes Brahmananda Keshubchandra Sen. In a lecture he said that British rule is a divine dispensation.[11] His success lies in social reform. It does not seem that the revolutionaries got any inspiration from him. We never heard of a word of gratitude from anybody about him.

The influence of Shivnath Sastri was felt directly by Bepinchandra Pal, Dr. Sundarimohan Das and others.[12] Some of us perceived that dimly in our time. Their influence was not felt in a big scale. But nobody can stand in comparison with Swamiji. Some of us used to respect the moral force of Shivnath Sastri. Of course, I was a student of a Brahmo teacher". The opinion of another revolutionary leader has been mentioned beforehand. Late Miss MacLeod told the present-writer in 1911 in the U. S. A., that the C. I. D. officer Denham told her, that wherever they went to search a revolutionary's house, they found the books of Vivekananda. As a result, the vim of wrath of the British-Indian police fell on Ramakrishna Mission founded by Swami Vivekananda. Thus, it had been no wonder that the Police wanted to ban the Mission.

From our long discussion and from the statements of those who worked for the freedom of the country, we find

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10. It does not seem to have been the conviction of Rammohan.
11. Surendranath Banerjea used to say the same thing. This was the talk of the Liberal Bourgeoisie before the partition of Bengal in 1905. Bourgeoisie was till then not militant. This gave rise to the split in the camp of the I. N. Congress at Surat in 1907.
12. These gentlemen in their elderly age joined the anti-partition movement, B. C. Pal used to talk about "Passive Resistance" in those days.

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that Swami Vivekananda was a dynamic personality. He turned the course of Hindu religious thought. He made it progressive. In Sister Nivedita's word, he made Hinduism once more aggressive. His plan was: "The eternal faith must become active and proselytising...and deliberate assimilation of new elements."[13] With the downfall of the Hindu power in India, Hindu religion and society had been moribund, civilization had been whipped back. The Moslem conquerors wanted to impose an Arabo-Persian religion and civilization on India. To a certain extent they were successful as innumerable numbers of Hindus became Moslems. Then, the latter-day rulers imposed a new culture on the people. The religion of the new conquerors also began to filter among the masses. An attempt was made to anglicise India, as Macaulay said: "Boys black in face, living on the banks of the Ganges will read Shakespeare and Milton and will glory in our literature". And it must be confessed that among all the foreign conquerors, the British had been most successful in denationalizing the Indian mind without the use of force. They made an intellectual conquest of the Indian mind. Indian mentality was imbued with English world-views. English *welt-anschauung* became their own. Ancient Indian literature and civilization were regarded from that angle of vision. This resulted in the Indians looking towards the achievement of their ancestors with blurred vision and looking towards the future with blank despair depicted on their face. The bourgeoisie had nothing but stark despair in their mind regarding the future of their race. Many feared that the colonization scheme once proposed by the British-Indian Government would be their undoing.[14] Some had such a distrust of their own race, that, they proposed to have a member of the British royal family living in India as the

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13. "The Master As I Saw Him", p. 230.

14. Many believed that what Sir Alexander Miller has prophesied was going to be true: The Indians will be the vanishing aboriginal race, and the Eurasians (present-day Anglo-Indians) are going to be the future Indians!

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ruling monarch assisted by a white layer of ruling class which will be the aristocracy (*Rajanyavarga*) ![15]

When such was the mental torpor of the people, Swami Vivekananda came back from the West and exhorted the youth of the country to awaken, to be race-conscious and to rejuvenate themselves. By his reading of the Sanskrit literature, he got a new light on the past history of the country. By his study of the Hindu scriptures, he threw a flood-light on the religious historical development of the past. His intensive study of the Occidental life and society made him to compare them with the institutions of his own country. He found out where the weakness lies. His intensive patriotism made him defend his country from the attacks of the foreigners.[16] But knowing where the shoe pinches, he wanted a thorough social reconstruction. He was not for piece-meal social reform, though he was terribly against child-marriage, as he said that he has suffered terribly on this account.[17] Of course, he was indifferent to the cause of widow-remarriage as it was not his business. But he clearly said that he was for every social reform. But the urgent need in his mind was the education of the dumb, driven millions of exploited masses. It is they who form the bulk of the Indian Society. These ignorant and hungry people were called by him *Gana-Narayana*. His epistles express pathos and sympathy for the down-trodden masses. Finally, as a program he says, "A hundred thousand men and women,.....should go over the length and

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15. This was the proposal of Justice Sarodacharan Mitra, once made in a paper. He was the man who criticised Swami Vivekananda and abused him when Swamiji's admirers requested him to accept the presidentship of the memorial meeting to be held after his demise!

16. While Swamiji was sick and was cruising on the river Hugly in a barge there came Dr. Campbell-White of the Y. M. C. A. to interview him. The latter asked the question as to the reason of his calling the Vedanta, as the only truth! Swamiji answered: "It is not a question of why! Vedanta says that either you accept it as truth or there is eternal damnation for you." He told his friends that "he paid these foreigners in their own coin!"

17. This is due to violent death of two of his younger sisters who suffered terribly in mother-in-law's houses.

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breadth of the land, preaching the gospel of salvation, the gospel of equality".[18]

This was the National program of Swami Vivekananda for the upliftment of the masses who form the majority of the Indian society. Does this sound reactionary and counter-revolutionary in its contents? It was the sycophants of British Imperialism posing themselves either as "orthodox" or as "progressive" who detracted Swamiji.[19] If one does not subscribe to the epigonous priestly religion, cannot be labelled as a "rebel" or a "heterodox"; again, if he does not subscribe to the program of the reformers also, cannot be denounced as a "reactionary". But in our study of the Indian historical events from the latter part of the last days of British rule, we have found out who and which groups have been reactionary, who stood as stumbling-block to the cause of fight for freedom, who never cared for the upliftment of the masses but confined themselves within the limit of vested interests of the moderate bourgeoisie. Does the regeneration of the Indo-Aryan race confine itself only in the efforts to abolish image-worship, widow-remarriage, abolition of caste-system and child-marriage? These detractors did not realize the dialectics of the materialistic history of India. The social reforms urged upon cannot be the pious wishes only; these must have economic bases. To-day, with the change of economic condition, social structure is changing. Those who have eyes can see it. Child-marriage among educated and upper classes are already things of the past; seclusion of the woman as an institution is already thrown in the limbo of antiquity; widow-remarriage has already been an institution acknowledged by the Hindu

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18. "The Life", vol. IV, p. 188.

19. It was two High Court Judges, one a Brahman another a Kayastha, that abused Swami Vivekananda when alternately they were offered the chairmanship of the memorial meeting. The Brahman Judge said, "He would have been hanged if there had been a Hindu King!" The other Judge, a Dakshin-Rahri Kayastha, abused him so much that those who approached him left the place in disgust. These sycophants posed as orthodox and defenders of Brahmanism! From Moslem days we have seen orthodoxy and sycophancy to the alien rulers go hand in hand. This symbiosis is an unwritten chapter in the social history of India.

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society. It exists all over India among the Sudra castes. Only in Bengal, where the society is most brahmanized, the upper castes do not tolerate it, though it is practised by the so-called lower castes. The *Charyapadas* of the Buddhists and latter-day *Mangala-Puranas* like *Padma-Purana* of Narayanadeva bear testimony of widow-remarriage (*Sanga*) till the fifteenth or sixteenth century. But as it was absent amongst the so-called upper classes, the people mistook the absence as due to religious sanction and to be the normal condition of the Hindu society. Hence, there has been the fight between the reformers and the conservatives. Pandit Iswarchandra Vidyasagar proved that there was sanction in its favor in Manu, Narada, Parasara, Katyayana texts. Some of them even advocated re-marriage of a woman after her husband either has lost caste or has become a monk. With the discovery of Kautilya's *Arthasastra* we find that re-marriage and divorce are both sanctioned in it. Indeed, Arthasastra depicted the true state of the Indo-Aryan society of old days than the priestly legislations of latter-days which betrayed class-prejudice in their injunctions. Moreover, compared with the Arthasastra and real social facts, we find the Smriti-legislations to be *ideational* only. Widow-remarriage and divorce exist with the Sudras. With the Jats, the laws of Narada and Katyayana are prevalent.[20] Thus, during the dark days of slavery, the epigonous growth was regarded as "Hinduism" by the ignorant priesthood. And this had been fought by the reformers. Truly, Swami Vivekananda has said that Smriti-legislations are intended for the Brahmans. The Sudras are not bound by it. As an illustration it is to be cited that Manu prohibited the eating of *Sigru* vegetable; but the annotator Kullukabhatta explained that it is prohibited to the Brahmans, but the Sudras can take it. In this way, we find the variance between actual facts and Smriti-legislations.

But Swami Vivekananda came with a still loftier ideal. From petty social and religious reforms he advised his fellow-countrymen to strike at the root, as then the leaves will fall

20. S. Roy: "Customs and Customary Laws in British India", p. 497.

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by themselves. "The uprise of the lowly" was his call to the country. "Educate the masses, give them their right"[21] had been his clarion-call. Thus from a petty-bourgeois moderate program of social reform, he gave an advanced social-revolutionary program.[22] Of course, it was a social-revolutionary program in incipiency. As regards the future society after the upliftment of the masses, his prophesy as early as 1896 for the world in general, is this: "Last will come the laborer (Sudra) rule."[23] Here, the reader must realize that in so early a time a "Labor" or "Socialist Government" anywhere in the West had been a pious wish only. But with prophetic instinct he visualized the establishment of the Proletarian State in future. We have discussed about it already. Thus, we have found him first an Indian patriot, now we have found him a prophet in international plane. Hence, we say to his detractors of the vested interest camps of the conservatives and the reformers: "Those who have beam in their own eyes, see mote in their brother's eyes."

As regards direct political works in the matter of India's effort for the achievement of nationality we get the following interesting news, when asked by somebody the following question: "Have you given any attention to the Indian National Congress movement?" He answered thus: "I do not claim to have given much: my work is in another part of the field. But I regard the movement as significant and heartily wish it success. A nation is being made out of India's different races..... It will certainly lead in the working out of India's homogeneity, in her acquiring what we may call democratic ideas. Education is coming, and compulsory education will follow. The immense power of our people must be utilized. India's potentialities are great and will be called forth."[24]

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21. Works: Vol. V, p. 153.
22. To-day the Indian Marxist groups are exactly following Swamiji's program without knowing it. They do not talk of social reform as it is only waste of energy. They live in orthodox society without ado.
23. "Letters of Swami Vivekananda", pp. 348-352.
24. Works: Vol. V, pp. 128-129.

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How prophetic instinct is again expressed in this saying in the matter of Indian national politics! How true it is in the context of present-day India!

India is now an independent Republic with international status. Formerly, the call of Swamiji to uplift the lowly, oppressed, and exploited fell on deaf ears. Historical-Materialistic condition was not ripe for it. Those who followed him in his religious program and those who took inspiration from him in the fight for freedom—the monks and the revolutionaries—all sprang from the middle class. Hence, the call to work for the uprise of the lowly fell flat. Class-interest and class-limitation precluded in taking up his program for social reconstruction. It is not amelioration that Swamiji wanted for the upliftment of the masses, but social transformation. Then he envisages the condition of civilization that will be developed by the masses in "Renaissant India" of his vision.[25]

The Historical-Materialistic condition of India has been the same as in Russia and China. The country is steeped in misery, squalor and ignorance. He himself has said, "These common people have suffered oppression for thousands of years."[26] This saying is not a verbiage of patriotic emotional ebullience but it is a statement of facts.

The thing is, the Indian bourgeoisie never looked to the working masses for their support in their struggle against foreign Imperialism nor ever cared to uplift them. They never believed in their capacity, though the history of India, both in ancient and in mediaeval periods, is replete with illustrations that tell us how conquerors have arisen from the masses and establishing themselves as rulers, have elevated their families and tribes into higher social order, thereby affiliating themselves to the Kshatriya Varna. On this account, Jaimini and his annotator Kumarila opined that the word "Rajah means Kshatriya." This *sutra* embodies the sanction for the actual social happenings. It is in defence of new polito-social events. It covers the real socio-historic evolution of the post-Buddhist

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25. Works: Vol. VII, pp. 308-310.
26. Works: Op.cit., p. 309.

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period. Truly, the Buddhist philosopher Aryadeva has sarcastically said, that "now-a-days anybody is being made a 'Kshatriya'."[27]

As a result of the disbelief of the race-capacity of their own people, the old Indian political leaders became despondent, and leaned on British Imperialism for the advancement of national welfare. They became absolutely pessimist of the future of the country as a separate entity from British Empire.[28] Their bourgeois class-character never made them go outside their circle and see the country. They discovered the nation to be living in land-lords' houses, Bar-Libraries and in Banks, hence they used to say that they were the nation,[29] and looked on the Indian world from that angle of vision.

It was Swami Vivekananda that first broke the bound. It was he who first gave the clarion-call to look to the masses and to raise them up. It was he who was the first person in the world to envisage a government of the toiling masses, and prophesied about the Proletarian Culture of the future. It was he who first spoke of the new civilization of the Indian masses. Again, it was he who developed the idea of mutual help for the furtherance of the welfare of society. Thus he says: "An organization that will teach the Hindus *mutual* help and appreciation is absolutely necessary."[30] Truly, Sister Nivedita says that the idea of mutual help was developed by Swamiji long before P. Kropotkin wrote his famous book on the subject. In this matter she quoted Swamiji's saying when he told her, " 'Don't you see? that's not the way of gregarious

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27. Quoted by K. P. Jayaswal: "Age of Manu and Yagnavalkya".
28. Sister Christine told the writer that men like Gokhale and others were absolutely pessimist about the future of the Indian race. They saw no hope for the future uprise of their country. Again, two elderly Anglomaniac barristers opined in the same way before the presence of the writer. One of them said that, "India will never can loosen herself from England". The other one said: "The English people out of their kindness are educating us, etc., why do the people go against them." These utterances were made after 1920! These people belonged to the moderate camp.
29. The utterance of Surendranath Banerjea during the Lucknow Pact in 1917.
30. "The Life" Vol. II, p. 367.

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animals! It would cut at the roots of social life!' Kropotkin's great work on "Mutual Aid" had not yet appeared, when these words were said."[31]

In this way, he anticipated some of the most radical social thinkers of the modern world. These thoughts he wanted to take shape in the life of the Indians. As to his plan of work for India he formulates it as early as 1895[32] and he writes, "I fully agree with the educated classes that a thorough overhauling of society is necessary. But how to do it? Now take the case of caste. In Sanskrit, *Jati* i.e., species—now, this is the first idea of creation. Variation (*vichitrata*), that is to say *Jati* means creation. Now if this diversity stops, creation will be destroyed..... Now the original idea of *Jati* was the freedom of the individual to express his nature, his *Prakriti*, his *Jati*, his caste, and it remained for thousands of years. Not even in the latest books is inter-dining prohibited, nor in any of the older books is inter-marriage forbidden. Then what was the cause of India's downfall? The giving up of this idea of caste. .....The present caste is not the real *Jati* but a hindrance to its progress. It really has prevented the free action of *Jati* i.e., caste or variation.....Therefore what I have to tell you, my countrymen, is this:—That India fell because you prevented and abolished caste. Every frozen aristocracy or privileged class is a blow to caste and is not-caste. Let *Jati* have its sway; break down every barrier in the way of caste and we shall rise. Now look at Europe....."[33] Here, Swamiji in such an early period has exposed the mistake of the Indologists in the translation of the word *Jati*. The old Sanskrit term does not cover the modern sociological concept. *Jati* i.e., Varna is an occupational grouping and not a hide-bound hereditary social group.[34] In the Mahabharata,

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31. "The Master As I Saw Him", p. 171.
32. Vide Works: Vol. IV, pp. 316-318.
33. That Sanskrit word 'Jati' is not "caste" in the known sense has been pointed out by Fick long ago. He called it 'species' or 'genus' or 'varna' or anything else but not caste. Later, Vincent Smith agreed to this definition.
34. Vide B. N. Datta: "Studies in Indian Social-polity."

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Santi Parva, Bhrigu says that *Jati* (Varna) has got occupational basis. The same explanation has been echoed in the Geeta. Swamiji has mentioned these facts in several places. Finally, he advises that the Hindus have to give up nothing, "but only to.....shake off their inertia, the result of centuries of servitude."[35]

Of course, today India is advancing on a different line. Now-a-days no one bothers about one's caste in the matter of every-day life. Hereditary caste has not played any role since the establishment of the British rule. Again, the constitution of the independent Indian Republic guarantees political freedom to everybody. "One adult person, one vote" is its motto. It further guarantees that career is open to talent. Thus the constitution of the Republic does not admit hereditary social grouping, clan or tribal distinction, creed or colour difference in the body-politic of India. As a result, Indian Hindu society is neither moving as wished by Swami Dayananda or as suggested by Swami Vivekananda. At present, India is moving on the bourgeois-democratic social line ushered in years long by the British rule. Now-a-days, grouping is going on in another direction. People are grouping themselves according to their occupations viz., "Clerks' Union," "Labor Union," "Peasants' Union", etc. Again, caste or tribal grouping is giving place to political grouping. But just the same, Swamiji gave a blow to the mediaeval priestly idea of a static (*sanatana*) society.

As regards inter-dining and inter-marriage, ancient texts are replete with illustrations in their favor.[36] But since the priestly ascendency, these gradually began to be curtailed till we come to the era of foreign domination. It is probable that the theory of *Kucchi* (cooked in butter) and *Pakki* (cooked in water) e.g., cooked rice, was developed during the Moslem rule. The description of serving the guests with rice and fish curry by the maid-servants in *"Naishadha-Charitam"* speaks on the contrary to the prevalent notion. And this book was written

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35. Swami Vivekananda's Works, Vol. IV, pp. 316-318.
36. Pre-Moslem epigraphic records speak of change of Varna of the ruling dynasties and inter-marriage with different Varnas.

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at the Court of Jayachandra of Kanauj. It is probable, that the more the popular priestly religion began to assimilate the non-Aryan or non-Vedic institutions in competition with the Mahayanists, the more they developed the idea of taboo in the body-politic of the society. In this way, Brahmanism had to preserve its "perennial" character. The anthropologists say that taboo has got class-character.[37] Surely, the Hindu notions of purity and cleanliness have got class-character.

Again, in the matter of "The problem of modern India and its solution" Swamiji says: "Would the sky of India again appear clouded over by waving masses of smoke springing from the Vedic sacrificial fire?.....or, is the deluge of a Buddhistic propaganda again going to turn the whole of India into a big monastery?.....or, is the discrimination of food,... going to have its all-powerful domination over the length and breadth of the country? Is the caste-system to remain..... Are the marriages of the different *Varnas* to take place..... To give a conclusive answer to all the questions, is extremely difficult.....Then what is to be done? What we should have is, what we have not, perhaps what our fore-fathers even had not; that which the Yavanas had;—that, impelled by the life-vibration of which, is issuing forth in rapid succession from the great dynamo of Europe, the electric flow of that tremendous power, vivifying the whole world.....we want that energy, that love of independence, that spirit of self-reliance, that immovable fortitude, that dexterity in action, that bond of unity of purpose, that thirst for improvement checking a little the constant looking back to the past, we want that extensive vision infinitely projected forward; and we want—that intense spirit of activity (*Rajas*) which will flow through our every vein, from head to foot."[38] Thus the ancient Charaiveti slogan resounds through him again. This powerful exhortation, penned down by Swamiji in January, 1899, still holds good for the Indians. There is no alter-

37. Vide Max Schmidt: "Ethnologii"; S. Freud: "Totem and Taboo."
38. Works: Vol. IV, pp. 336-337.

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native opinion in this matter. Swamiji's wish i.e., program of work for the rejuvenation of India is the only desideratum. Further, he elaborates his thesis on this matter thus as he says, "In India the quality of *Rajas* is almost absent, the same is the case with *Sattva* in the West."

Here, it is to be noted that all of the Yavanas of the West are not in the same niveau of civilization and activity of life as there are differences in the socio-economic planes. Now-a-days, impartial scientists admit that environmental factors are very important to mould a race. The anthropologist Von Luschan has said that environment makes a race.[39] Boas and others have demonstrated that the races settling in the New World from Europe, change their head-forms in the second generation which is the most crucial anthropological test so far. Again, social environment reacts on the building up of character. Further, the sociologist Lester. F. Ward, has said that the change of world-view changes a race.[40] This means that, with the change of the mentality of a given people their habits of life change; thereby their role in history changes. This has been repeatedly demonstrated in world's history.

Importance of heredity in a race, has been the sibboleth of the Occidental imperialists.[41] In the period of colonial-imperialism it has been their slogan to keep down the subjugated people. But the recent experiments of Morgan in America and of Muller in England demonstrate that the *Drosiphila* (Fruit-flies) change their racial traits by the change of environment. Thus, the old theory of Lamark has been renovated that acquired characteristics are inherited.[42] Lastly, comes the crushing blow from a semi-Oriental race—the Russian. The investigations of Prof. Michurin developed by his pupil

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39. "Rassen, Sprachen und Voelker."
40. "Applied Sociology."
41. Vide criticism by Prof. Olga Lepeshinskaya: "Our Contribution to the Science of Life in Soviet Union," No. 9. 1950.
42. Maurice Cornforth: "Dialectical Materialism and Science," p. 52, 1950.



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Lysenko announced that environment is the great factor that changes a race. Too much stress has been laid on heredity.[43] This theory, called "Michurinism" aptly named "Creative Darwinism" sent a *furor* in the scientific world, but the objectors opined, that the conclusion of Lysenko is not based on sufficient data.[44] But still later, a group of Marxist scientists of England, assembled in a conference, upheld the views of Lysenko. They agreed that heredity does its work. But heredity in the course of time yields to environmental factors. Thus, heredity is not a permanent factor. In the long run environment wins.

From the momentous dispute in the scientific world, we deduce that the hypothesis of the Smriti-legislators and of the Mimamsakas regarding the heredity of caste-character is nullified, and the claim of the imperialists of North-European extraction is set at naught. That the theory of heredity is influenced by imperialist propaganda was known to Swamiji when he said in reference to the educated Sontals, that "As such, the partiality of the scientific investigators of the present-day, to the doctrine of hereditary transmission of qualities, is being gradually diminished."[45]

When Swamiji says that '*Rajas*' has been the monopoly of the Javanas, that saying is unacceptable to-day. As already has been pointed out, that all the Occidentals are not in the same plane of civilization. South Europe has got a moribund civilization. Intellectually it is a desert where only priest-craft thrives. Moreover, a comparative knowledge of the time-lag between different periods of Oriental civilization and culture with that of the West discovers the truth. The Orient has not always been dormant or inactive. Again, apart from the environmental factor, the change of world-views i.e., mental attitude towards the world is an important factor in building up of character. Swamiji has repeatedly expressed

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43. Lysenko: "The Situation in Biological Science," p. 41.
44. Vide Julian Huxley's criticism on the matter.
45. Works: Vol. IV, p. 365.

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it on various occasions. "Buddha ruined the Hindus and Christ the Romans" has been his favorite dictum.[46] This expresses the truth that the change of *welt-anschaung* is a great factor with a people. His vision of a new proletarian culture in India, presupposes the change of socio-economic environmental factors and world-views.

When Swamiji says that what India needs to-day is *Rajas*, that is the absolute desideratum in the present-day India. It is imperative in the historical-materialistic development of present-day India. The people do not yet realize that the effects of the dark days of slavery: stagnation of public life, arrested growth of civilization, static condition of society have been taken by the ignorant peoples as *Sanatana Dharma* of their society and religion. Paralytic condition of Indo-Aryan mind and social body-politic have been regarded as *Sattva*. Stupefaction of life due to slavery which was nothing but *Tamas* was interpreted as *Sattva*, and the wily priests exploited the situation. The foreigners have expressed their experiences that during Moslem rule, the country was infested with begging friars, wandering, looting and fighting. Kabir's admonition to them was a an illustration to the point.[47]

Hence with stentorian voice Swamiji gives call to the Indians to acquire the quality of *Rajas*. Dialectics of independent India demands it. Let material improvement of the Indian people take place first. Let the standard of living of the people be raised, let every hungry belly be fed, let fruits of scientific culture percolate among the masses to raise their standard of civilization, let there be equality for all, let the dialectical process run its course in the material plane in arriving at the Synthesis, then we can think of tracing the dialectical process in the spiritual plane. Swamiji emphatically has said, "I do not believe in God that cannot give bread."[48]

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46. Works: Vol. V, p. 357.
47. Vide quotations in Moreland's "India after Akbar"; Rai Saheb Jamini Ghose's "Sanyasi and Fakir raiders of Bengal".
48. Works: Vol. IV, p. 313.

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Hence he exhorts his fellow-countrymen to emulate the *Rajas* of the West.

Thus, *paripassu* the Indian situation, this program urged to his disciples had been a social-revolutionary one. His program all the way through had neither been reactionary nor counter-revolutionary. Only, the historical-materialistic conditions of the country was not yet then ready to appreciate it. Bourgeois intellectuals were engrossed in their own developmental welfare.

Again, in an article on "Modern India" in 1899 Swami Vivekananda at first delineates the polito-social development of India in the past. Relying on the strength of present-day researches of Indology since the demise of Swamiji, one may or may not agree with him on his interpretation. But according to the present-writer, the delineation is correct in the main. He says, "To protect the State.....the King is continually draining the resources of his subjects. His especial prey—his milch cows—are the Vaishyas."[49] This is what is exactly expressed in Vedic Literature. "The King devours everything" is the wailing. "A King can rob a Vaishya with impunity, can kill a Sudra" is the dictum of the sacred literature.[50]

Then he says, "Neither under the Hindu Kings, nor under the Buddhist rule, do we find the common subject-people take any part in expressing their voice in the affairs of the State.....as a recognized rule of the State they have no direct voice in the supreme Government. The power of the populace is struggling to express itself in indirect and disorderly ways, without any method. The people have not as yet the conscious knowledge in the existence of this power. There is neither the attempt on their part to organize into a united action, nor, have they got the will to do so; there is also a complete absence of that capacity.....Is this due to want of proper laws?.....no, that is not it. There are laws, there are methods, separately and distinctly assigned for the guidance of different departments of Government.....

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49-50. Vide B. N. Datta: "Dialectics of Land-Economics of India"; also Keith and Macdonell; "Vedic Index."

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But at the root of all, is the injunction of the *Rishi*, the word of divine authority, the revelation of God coming through the inspired *Rishi*:" With this utterance, modern Indology is at variance. Nowadays, we have voluminous tomes written by hypernationalist writers who find that what happened in the West happened in India as well. We are told that in Vedic India, there was the "check and balance" practice in a state by having a king, a *Sabha* and a *Samiti*.[51] Then in the time of the Buddha there were democratic republic in North India. Some Anglomaniacs relying on Henry Maine's opinion believe that India had Tribal Communism, Village Communism and all sorts of wonderful Elysian things in ancient times. Even they interpret the religious terms to be found in the Smritis viz.,— *Samanodaka*, etc., on the basis of Maine's theory![52]

It is true that the Vedic Literature speaks of Sabha and Samiti. The Buddhist Literature speaks of Gana-Republics. But these have been oligarchical republics which are *Timocracies* to use the aristotelian term. These republics were ruled by an oligarchy of rich families. As regards their internal workings we get an inkling of it in the *'Krishna-Narada Sambad*, in *Santi-parva* of the *Mahabharata*. Here, Krishna, who was a *Ganamukhya* (Alderman) deplores his helpless condition in the Executive Council of the Andhak-Vrishni League! Illustrating it, Bhisma supports monarchy as the best form of Government. We would take it for granted that the Indo-Aryan masses enjoyed a substantial amount of liberty before the rise of the Mauryan empire. But since the rise of Gupta imperialism in the North, we find this liberty crushed out of existence. The same thing happened in the South with the rise of the mediaeval Vijayanagara empire.[53] Of couse, the Indian masses did not have that conscious knowledge of their power, they did not organize

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51. Vide K. P. Jayaswal: "Indian Polity"; Benoy K. Sarkar's "Political Theories of the Ancient Hindus"; Narayan Bandopadhyaye: "Political Theories of the Ancient Hindus"; Kane: "History of Dharmasastras." Vol. III.

52. Vide Golapchandra Sastri: "Treatise on Hindu Law" and answer to it in J. C. Ghose's "Treatise on Hindu Law."

53. Vide B. N. Datta: "Dialectics of Land-economics of India."

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themselves for united action as Swamiji says. But, these did not happen anywhere in the Orient. When a state has arisen out of coalescence of different tribes and a monarch is put on the head, this third power has crushed the diverse factions. Bhisma's description of *Nairajya* (Anarchy) and the subsequent rise of monarchy agrees with F. Engel's theory of the development of State.

It is true that the Indian masses did not develop that conscious political power like the peoples of Greece and Italy in ancient times. Instead of that they revolted in the name of religion. What led to the rise of the Ajivakas, the Jainas, the Buddhists and other dissident sects mentioned in the *Cullaniddesa?* Already in the time of Asoka, the peasants and the Vaishyas of Malwa have turned Buddhists. What was the dialectics of Historical-Materialism behind all these phenomena. There is no history for it.

As regards the role of the Rishis in the matter of laws, Arthasastras speak on the contrary, Swamiji fell in the trap of priestly theories which advocated their class-interest. Truly, Arthasastra is superior to the Dharmasastra. The "Sukranitisar" says that in a law-suit of the people, the first court for decision is the guild (*Shreni*) court, the final decision lies in the hands of the King.[54]

Then he speaks of the Sudras, "through whose physical labor only are possible the influence, the prowess of the Kshatriya, and the fortune of the Vaisya. What is their history, who, being the real body of society, are designated, at all times, in all countries, as 'they—the base-born'?" Truly Swamiji has come to the conclusion that it is the toiling class that produces wealth. "It is they who have introduced civilization among you" (the higher classes).[55] Yet, they are ill-treated in every country and in every age. But by the irony of fate, due to foreign rule, all the Indians have become Sudras. But he has noticed that the Sudras of the countries

54. Vide B. N. Datta: "Studies in Indian Social-Polity", chapter on "Authoritative Source of Hindu Law."

55. Works: Vol. VII, "Conversations and Dialogues," p. 148.

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other than India are little awake. Here the labor combinations in advanced Occidental countries are hinted at. Then he alludes to the rise of modern Greece and Italy to Kshatriyahood, while Turkey and Spain etc., are declining.

In this article Swamiji is speaking of the Kshatriya, Sudra, etc., in figurative sense. He hints to the fact that the *Varnas* are not races with hereditary characteristics. These are condition of polito-economic developments of peoples of the world. Thereby he rightly implied that Varna divisions are not peculiar to India. The economic condition determines the stand of a given group in society. Varna is not a God-ordained institution as claimed by the Brahmanical priesthood. Swamiji is exposing the hollowness of this claim. Hence, he adumberates the rise of the Sudra as a class. "That is to say, not like that as at present, when Sudras are becoming great by acquiring the characteristic qualities of the Vaisya or the Kshatriya, but a time will come, when the Sudras of every country, with their in-born Sudra nature and habits.....will get absolute supremacy in every society."[56] Here he hints at the historic developments that have taken place in India and elsewhere, where a person getting political supremacy arrogates to himself to be of higher social order and parentage. The Mauryas, the Guptas, the Vardhanas, the Palas, the Senas, the Kadamba rulers, etc., are all illustrations of this metamorphosis. In mythical India, Visvamitra, Parasurama, Drona, are examples of it. The Puranas give a long list of the Brahmans who became Kshatriyas. In modern time, Shivaji and Ranjit Singh are shining examples of it. Ibbetson has truly said in the matter of sociology of Punjab hill people, that "a Caste is a status group." Indeed, it is true everywhere in India. In present-day India, a Caste economically becoming prosperous, is changing its Varna affiliation by claiming to be of higher order than that in which it is born.

Similarly, in the West a proletarian by becoming rich is elevating himself to the order higher than himself. He is becoming

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56. Works: Vol. IV, p. 401.

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a member of the bourgeois class. In England, many quondam labor leaders by getting titles are being elevated to the aristocratic class. For this reason, Swamiji says that a time will come when there will be the rising of the Sudra class, with their Sudrahood.

Then he says, "The first glow of the dawn of this new power has already begun to slowly break upon the western world, .....Socialism, Anarchism, Nihilism and like other sects, are the vanguard of the social revolution that is to follow." This piece of his writing evinces that he was acquainted with the literature of the labor movements of the West and of the efforts of the social-revolutionaries at the last decade of the nineteenth century. How prophetic was his saying when the first Labor Government was established in Russia in 1917 after the October Revolution! He forestalled the Bolschevists in his prophecy.

Further he delineates the effect of imperialist rule over an alien people. Then he castigates the English who have "turned even India, the mother of all riches, into the principal mart of England." Lastly he says, "India is slowly awakening through her friction with the outside nations; and as the result of this little awakening in the appearance, to a certain extent, of free and independent thought it modern India"! Then he describes the conflict between the old and the foreign-imported new institutions in Indian life. *A propos* this struggle between the old and the new in Indian life, he says: "Have we not then to learn anything from the West?.....Is our society entirely spotless, without any flaw?—There are many things to learn, we must struggle for new and higher things till we die.—Struggle is the end of human life."[57] In connection with this struggle he says further: "O India, this is your terrible danger.....whatever ideas, whatever manners, the white men praise or like, are good, whatever things they dislike or censure, are bad! Alas! What can be a more tangible proof of foolishness than this?"[58]

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57. Works: Vol. IV, p. 410.
58. "Works," Vol. IV, pp. 410.

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But this attitude of mind has happily passed over since the Swadeshi Movement in 1906. The Indian has discovered that his country is worth living, he is identifying himself with his country.[59] That "glorious revolution of 1906" as named by Prof. Benoy Kumar Sarkar, ushered in by the Swadeshi Movement in Bengal and which had its repercussion all over India, completely changed the mentality of the Indians, especially those of Bengal. Ramsay Macdonald, referring to the Swadeshi Movement, has truly depicted the situation by exclaiming: "It is the resuscitation of the Indo-Aryan in the Hindu."[60] Indeed so it is.

As Swami Vivekananda has lamented about the sad state of Indian mentality of his time, the contrary took place since the inauguration of the Swadeshi Movement. His standpoint was to "see again the strong point of that India, reinforced by the strong points of this age, only in a natural way. The new stage of things must be a growth from within."[61]
Then he laments, that "the Westerners have now taught us that those stupid, ignorant, low-caste millions of India, clad only in a loin cloth, are non-Aryans!! They are therefore no more our kith and kin! !"[62] Of course this imperialist device to separate the Indians created false anthropological notions in the minds of many persons, yet impartial and non-official physical anthropology of to-day are clearing the mistake. Moreover, the National Government is eradicating the difference between the high and low castes. The national Constitution guarantees that. The dialectics of Historical-Materialism of India is rapidly fulfilling the wishes of Swamiji.

In conclusion about the national views of Swamiji, we say that he was a hundred per cent Indian, intensely patriotic to the core. In this matter he was in advance of his time. By comparing both the society of the West and that of his own

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59. Bepinchandra Pal: "Spirit of Indian Nationalism."
60. Ramsay Macdonald: "Awakening of India."
61. Nivedita: "The Master as I Saw Him," p. 195.
62. Works: Vol. IV, p. 412.

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country, he warned against Europeanization of India.[63] Happily, the dialectics of history has negativated that tendency of making India a second England. It was the Christian missionaries who attempted at it.[64] The Indians as the subject race, who were hypnotized by their conquerors and their various agents, were ever victims of this mirage. Such a phenomenon always happens with a subject people. In independent India, the new generation will have a new mentality befitting its greatness.

63. Here we remember the admonition of the poet Rabindranath Tagore to the Japanese when he visited Japan in 1917.
64. As an illustration to this attempt we remember that Rev. Barrows, the first Haskell lecturer in India and the Secretary of the famous "Parliament of Religions" held at Chicago in 1896, after his return to the U.S.A., wrote the following to Anagarika Dharmapala, the Secretary of the Mahabodhi Society: "Make India a second England." The letter appeared in the Indian press.

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# IX

## SWAMI VIVEKANANDA : SOCIOLOGICAL VIEWS

Modern India is much indebted to the Orientalists of Europe for unearthing the treasures of Indian past. To Germany especially, India owes a debt of gratitude for her work in Indology. German scholarship being free from imperial bias has to a great extent properly evaluated the ancient culture of India. There was a time when there was a great enthusiasm in the name of ancient Indian culture in the German universities. Prof. Von Luschan of Berlin University used to testify it in his class in 1921. This enthusiasm existed when he was a student. It is no wonder that Swami Vivekananda praised Prof. Max Mueller and Paul Deussen for their life-long devotion to the study of ancient Indian culture. In his enthusiasm Max Mueller foisted the name "Aryan" to the Indo-Germanic-speaking peoples of Europe, and Deussen used to call the Indians, "our Eastern cousins".[1]

But with the expansion of colonial imperialism, feeling began to change in the West. In the meantime, anthropology as a science took its rise. Scholars began to investigate the somatology of the different peoples of the world and they found variation and differentiation among different stocks of mankind. Again, with the rise of industrial bourgeoisie in Europe, Morgan and Mendel's theory of heredity was strengthened. The industrial bourgeoisie of the West striving for commercial expansion were attempting colonial conquest of the undeveloped peoples of the Orient. Hence, their imperial pride would not brook any identity with the subjugated and exploited people.

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1. When the present-writer met Prof. Deussen at Berlin in early 1918, at a reception given to him by the Indians, he called Swamiji "my friend Vivekananda", and the Indians, "my eastern cousins".

   The latter-day Nazi papers used the same term in regard to the Indians.

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The Anglo-Indian officials of the time took Max Mueller to task for saying, that "the blood that is flowing in the veins of Tommy Atkins is also flowing in the veins of the Bengalee peasant." Consequently, he had to change his saying that by the word "Aryan" he did not mean somatic characteristics, he meant language. In the meantime, German patriotism identified Indo-Germanic people with the Germans. According to them the Germans composed the real "Aryan" race. From Hegel onwards Indo-Germanism became Germanism which in twentieth century was christened "Nordicism". Noticing this metamorphosis of anthropological concepts, the French writer, Jean Finot, has humorously said: "Indo-German theory became German theory, and German theory became Aryan theory."[2]

In the meantime, a great change in the mental outlook of the British-Indian officials was taking place in India *paripassu* the rise of Indian nationalism. They became the protagonists of research in things Indian. They identified race with language though it was discarded in the West, where Prof. F. Mueller was its last exponent. They introduced this error in Indology. Thus, identifying race or biotype with language, these scholars discovered a "Dravidian race", a "Kho race", a "Mon-khmer race", and what not in India. Again, identifying dialect with language, they discovered several hundreds of languages in India. Further, noticing the difference of manners and customs amongst the peoples of different parts of India that have evolved in the course of her long history, they took them to be peoples of different ethnic stocks. Thus, they did not find any unity among the Indian people save its loyalty to the British throne.[3] Thus they blew India up into smithereens! Again, lastly with the division of the Hindu people into "Caste Hindus" and "Scheduled Castes", a statistical formula was also found out to support this imperialist political trick! Again, persistent attempt began

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2. "L'agonie et mort de race".
3. Vide Herbert Risley: "People of India".

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to be made that the substratum of the Indian people was Negrito.[4]

There is a Sanskrit saying that, "Like king, like subject". When the ruling class was harping on the inferiority of the Indians as a race, when it began to be preached in Europe and America that the "Aryan" is a God's chosen blonde man, when it was proclaimed from the house-top that the Indians are a low type of people, only they are a "burden of the white-man", when the theory of the "Control of the Tropics" was expounded, when the "peculiarity of the Anglo-Saxon race" was bragged about, when it was preached that loyalty to England and English institutions is the only salvation of the divergent Indian peoples, it has been no wonder that the Indian intellectuals were overwhelmed by this propaganda. And this imperialist propaganda have been done in the name of science. But science in India was officialized i.e., science spoke the official mind. The hypnotized Indians, as yet not being fully initiated into the mysteries of science and a few being in the research field under their foreign masters, gobbled up these imperialist cants as scientific truth! Moreover, the hangers-on and the sycophants of the imperialist Government began to sing paeans for the theories of their masters. Though India is now an independent sovereign Republic, yet these quondam sycophants are still at this old and nefarious game.

Further, the Occidental Indologists being deceived by the priestly text-books, interpreted ancient Indian society in their light. This resulted in giving a queer interpretation of Indian social history of the past. They interpreted the four Varnas as of four racial elements as in this phenomenon they found support of their discriminating colonial rule; that Hindu Caste system has got racial basis; that the ancient Hindus were nothing but religio-maniacs, etc. These mistakes percolating through English literature were accepted as the scientific truth by the naive Indian mind. The Indians accepted their

4. Vide a critique of all these theories in B. N. Datta: "Races of India" in Journal of Letters, Calcutta University. Vol. XXVI, 1935.

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past history as interpreted by the old Indologists and the British-Indian officials.

Here, it must be said that though Indological research is moving in the old groove, yet the new generation is manifesting a new view towards some of the institutions connected with ancient India. This view manifested itself during the debate on Swami Vivekananda's lecture at the Congress of History of Religions held at Paris in 1900. Again, when the writer contributed a paper in "Anthropos" saying, that the Indian caste-system is not based on race-system but on occupational grouping, Dr. Koeppers the editor informed the writer, that the newer generation of the Indologists are more and more inclined to the same view.[5]

This was the situation regarding Indian culture and her people. But action has got its reaction. As a reaction to imperialist chauvinism, Indian chauvinism took its rise. This reacted in the appearance of Rajnarain Bose's "Superiority of Hinduism", Harbilas Sarda's "Hindu Superiority", B. G. Tilak's "Orion" and "Arctic Home in the Veda" and Swami Vivekananda's 100 % Indiaism which led him to defend everything connected with so-called Hinduism. The patriotic Hindus began to speak of special "Psyche" of the Indians, etc.[6] The Indian intellectuals were then in the midst of cross-currents. The transitional intellectual stage engendered by the dialectics of materialism of Indian history, gave rise to Indian or Hindu chauvinism. When the foreign rulers were boasting of their superiority, and challenging that the national history of the Indians was nothing but a void, there was no other option left for the Indian patriots but to ransack the past and to brag about the achievements of their ancestors as a counterpoise to the boastings of their rulers. Thus, imperialist *hauteur* gave rise to hyper-nationalism of the subject-race.

In this *milieu,* we should read the sociological findings of Swami Vivekananda which are counter to priestly mal-observation and foreign mal-interpretation. It is a pity that none of the

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5. "Anthropos", Ed. XXII, 1927, Vienna.
6. An Indian scholar while boasting of seven years of Oxford education had been an exponent of it.

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Indian scholars ever heeded to the interpretation of Indian social and religious histories of Swamiji. They have been under the hypnotic influence of imperialism; a white man's saying is a revelation, an Indian cannot be counted as *par* in anyway with a white man.[7] Hence, the interpretations of Indian sociology by Swamiji were sent to the limbo. Moreover, Swami Vivekananda is regarded by some as a religious *paranoiac* and by others as a reactionary not worth consideration.

Now, let us begin with his utterances regarding ancient history. Here, we begin with the race question which has become acute to-day. We have already said that the British-Indian statesmen and writers have bolstered up a "Dravidian race" in contradistinction to the so-called Aryans who came all the way from the German forest in some bygone days to India to plague the ancient inhabitants of the soil. In this matter, he says thus regarding Indian ethnology[8]: "A veritable ethnological museum! Possibly, the half-ape skeleton of the recently discovered link will be found on search here, too. The Dolmens are not wanting. Flint implements can be dug out almost anywhere. The lake-dwellers—at least the river-dwellers—must have been abundant at one time. The cave-men and leaf-wearers still persist. The primitive hunter living in forests are *en evidence* in various parts of the country. Then there are the more historical varieties—the Negrito-Kolarian, the Dravidian and the Aryan. To these have been added from time to time, dashes of nearly all the known races, and a great many unknown—various breeds of Mongoloids, Mongols, Tartars, and the so-called Aryans of the philologists. Well, here are the Persian, the Greek, the Yuchee,[9] the Hun, the Chin, the Scythian and many more, melted and fused: the Jews, Parsis, Arabs, Mongols, down to the descendants of the Vikings and the lords of the German forests, yet

7. It is true as yet. The writer has got painful experiences of it.
8. Works: Vol. IV, pp. 242-247 (*Second Edition*).
9. Now-a-days spelt Yuet-chi or Yue-chi, vide B. N. Datta: "The Ethnology of Central Asia and its bearing on India", in "Man in India", Dec. 1942.

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undigested;—an ocean of humanity, composed of these race-waves seething, boiling, struggling, constantly changing form, rising to the surface, and spreading and swallowing little ones, again subsiding—this is the history of India." This statement gives the latest ethnological news of India in a nut-shell. In such an early time when anthropology was an unknown science in India, Swamiji had the latest knowledge of Indian ethnology. Then he continues: "In the midst of this madness of nature, one of the contending factions discovered a method, and through the force of its superior culture, succeeded in bringing the largest number of Indian humanity under its sway. The superior race styled themselves the Aryas or Nobles and their method was *Varnâshramâchâra*—the so-called caste". Here, Swamiji hints at the so-called Indo-Aryan culture which dominates India from ancient time. All the peoples of India are either aryanized in speech or in religion. Outside this culture-circle live the people who are called in the Smritis as *Antajas* and who are dubbed to-day as the "aboriginals". In the Rig-Veda, we find the word 'Arya' which means a cultivator. But it is clear from the Rig-Veda that the Varnas have not differentiated themselves in the Vedic Age. In our latest research, we find that the sons of the latter-day four Varnas have taken part in composing the hymns of the Rig-Veda.[10] If the Varnas had been sharply divided in the Vedic Age, we would not have found Kutsa, Kanva, Kakshivant and Ailusha Kavasta who were *dasiputras* i.e., sons of slave-girls as rishis and composers of hymns! Again, we would not have found Janasruti, a Sudra, as a king, a Jabala Satyakama of unknown parentage accepted as a Brahman in the Upanishadas. Again, it seems that *Varnashrama* developed into rigid form in the Pauranic Age, i.e., after Buddhist inundation. The Jatakas bear testimony to the fact that men used to change their Varnas i.e., occupations.[11] The *Vayu Purana* and the *Harivansa* admit it. Of course, it is the

10. Vide B. N. Datta: "Dialectics of Hindu Ritualism", pt. I.
11. Vide Fick: Die Sociale Gliederung in Nordoestlichen Indien Zu Buddhas Zeit.

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priestly claim that Varna-division existed in the time of the Rig-Veda. The priestly class could not dream of any human society without Varna-division (vide the description of Svetadwipa and other fanciful countries in the Puranas). Strangely, from China to Germany there had been fourfold division of human society in ancient times.[12] Swamiji says, "Of course the men of the Aryan race reserved for themselves, consciously or unconsciously, a good many privileges; yet the institution of caste has always been very flexible, sometimes too flexible to ensure a healthy uprise of the races very low in the scale of culture."

Whether the "Aryan" had ever been a race in India is a moot question. But the fact is that the latter-day Smritis speak of the *Antajas* as outside the pale. Again, among the so-called Aryans, the upper three classes were the privileged ones—*Dwijas*, while the Sudras were the disenfranchised ones in the social state. This was analogous with the Patricians and the Plebeians of Rome, the aristocrats i.e., men of money as the citizens, and the poorer people without money as outside the right of citizenship in Attica. Besides these differences, there were the wandering *Vratyas* who were outside the Varnashrama polity.

Then he further says, "Though apparently different from the social methods of other nations, on close inspection, the Aryan method of caste will not be found so very different except on two points: The first is, in every other country the highest honour belongs to the Kshatriya—the man of the sword. .....In India, the highest honour belongs to the man of peace —the Sharman, the Brâhman, the man of God."

As regards the flexibility of the Caste institution spoken of by Swamiji, which would have sounded strange to the ears of the foreigners and blasphemous to the orthodox Hindus of his days, it is absolutely true. Even to this day, the four Varnas are being evolved. The Bhils of Central Indian forest are being given the status of Kshatriya[13]; Brahmans are being

12. Vide B. N. Datta: "Studies in Indian Social Polity", Ch. II. "Historical Parallels".

13. Vide G. S. Ghurye: "Aboriginal or Backward Hindu".



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formed out of untouchable castes. Those who have eyes can see the phenomena. Only the Pax Brittanica stopped these neo-castes to play their role in history. But the leading caste always had not been the Brahmans. The Jainas, and the Buddhists gave the priority to the Kshatriyas. Swetashavatara Upanishad indirectly admits it. The superior claim of the priestly class is asserted as early as in Satapatha Brahmana, but sometimes at the latter period of the Vedic Age, there was the class-struggle between the Kshatriyas and the Brahmans. The "Brahmajaya" and "Brahmagavi" poesies of the Atharva Veda testify it. The Mahabharata mentions it. The Brahmans were badly mauled. Then there must have been a compromise, as the Satapatha Brahmana asserts, that the Brahmans got four immunities in the social state. Yet, at the time of the Buddha, the Brahmans were regarded as lower than the Kshatriyas. The King of Kosala used to talk with his Brahman ministers from behind a screen.[14] The Buddha himself said that the Kshatriyas are of first order.

The highest position that the Brahman enjoys was usurped by the priests perhaps at the period when there was no Kshatriya ruling dynasty after post-Vedic Age. From the time of the rule of the Nanda dynasty which carved out a big empire in the North as fore-stalling the gigantic Maurya Empire of the future, we don't hear of the Kshatriya rulers. The Puranas admit it. Then Swamiji compares the difference of unit of the society of the West with that of India. He says: "The law of caste in every other country takes the individual man or woman as the sufficient unit. Wealth, power, intellect or beauty suffices for the individual to leave the status of birth and scramble up to anywhere he can. Here (in India), the unit is all the members of a caste-community. Here, too, one has every chance of rising from a low caste to a higher or to the highest: only, in this birth-land of Altruism, one is compelled to take his whole caste along with him. In India, you cannot on account of your wealth, power or any other

14. Vide Fick: "Die Sociale Gliederung in Nordoestlichen Indien Zu Buddhas Ziet".

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merit, leave your fellows behind and make common cause with your superiors,..... If you want to rise to a higher caste in India, you have to elevate all your caste first, and then there is nothing in your onward path to hold you back."

We have already discussed about it previously that this is the true situation of Indian social history. The Smritis expressing class-arrogance of the priestly order side-track the real issues. The true import is laid bare by Swamiji at such an early period of modern time. What he has said is the true key to Indian sociology. What strong acumen and power of observation he had in discriminating the true state of social evolution of the West and of India!

Then he continues: "This is the Indian method of fusion, and this has been going on from time immemorial. For in India, more than anywhere, such words as Aryans and Dravidians, are only of philological import, the so-called craniological differentiation finding no solid ground to work upon." Again, he speaks the bold truth about Indian sociology and anthropology. The impartial anthropologists of the West have always upheld that by the word "Aryan" no race is meant. Koeppers says that, "Aryan is an ethnic-cultural community" (Gemeindschaft). The word "Aryan" bespeaks a language only. The Indo-Europeans i.e., the Aryan-speaking peoples of the world are divided into different somatic characteristics. It is a national-chauvinistic game of some of the imperial nations of Europe that wanted to identify their own nations with the hypothetic Aryan. In this matter, instead of talking anthropology, they talked anthropotheosophy. But the Soviet scientists are giving fitting answers to these bourgeois-chauvinist pseudo-scientists. We have discussed about it already.

Swamiji then continues, "Whatever may be the import of the philological terms: "Aryan" and "Tamilian,".....the dividing line had been from the most ancient times, one of language and not of blood." This is a scientific truth of absolute category. The dividing line is speech. Long ago,

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Campbell said, that going South from the North, one finds the language changing but not the race.[15]

An eminent anthropologist like Flower has said that the so-called Dravidians belong to a group of the Mediterranean race. Huxley has agreed with him. It was only the ethnologist Keane who brought the Dravidians from outside India. On the other hand, the German anthropologists who have made practical investigations on the Indian soil, deny the existence of a Dravidian race.[16] One of the leading German anthropologists of present-day, Von Eickstedt, after an extensive field-work in India gave out the verdict that both the Northern and the Southern Indians are of Mediterranean race.[17] He has suggested that the word 'Dravidian' should be abolished as soon as possible. Dr. B. S. Guha in his Ethnological Report in Census of 1931, called the Telugus (Andhras) to be the best representatives of the Indian Mediterraneans. But they speak a Dravidian language! Even, the most primitive Adinalatur skull is regarded as an armenoid one. Of course, the Germans opine that there is a "Veddaid" stock that is named by Haddon[18] as "pre-Dravidian". But this Veddaid stock has got a texture of hair which is Indo-European and Caucasian.

But vested interests would not hear science. It does not lie in their interest. As a result, we have today a foolish quarrel as the offspring of imperialist machination. Swami Vivekananda says: "The super-arrogated excellence of birth of any caste in India is only a pure myth, and in no part of India has it, we are sorry to say, found such congenial soil owing to linguistic differences, as in the South." The dialectics of Historical-Materialism of India is responsible for it. Kharavela, the King of Kalinga after Maurya period, while convening the Jaina *Sangiti* in Bhubaneswar, has called himself a descendant

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15. "Indian Ethnology".
16. Vide B. N. Datta: "Races of India" in Journal of Deptt. of Letters, vol. XXVI, 1935.
17. "Rassenkunde and Rassengeschichte der Menschhite".
18. "Races of Man".

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of Chediraj Basu.[19] This means, he claimed to be the descendant of the Rig-Vedic Chediraj Kasu. The mediaeval kings of the South also claimed to be of Northern Kshatriya lineage, etc. It is the language and not religion that has split up the South from the North.

Then he exhorts the Brahmans to stand up to a nobler ideal. Thus he says, "We earnestly entreat the Brahmans of the South not to forget the ideal of India—the production of a Universe of Brahmans, pure as purity, good as God Himself: this was at the beginning, says the Mahabharata, and so will it be in the end." Here, Swamiji hints at the saying of Bhrigu in the Santi Parva of Mahabharata where he says that all the Varnas were originally Brahmans, but with the changes of occupation and character, they have transformed themselves into different Varnas. The Vedic literature also has said, "all Varnas are Dwijas." Perhaps with the pressure from the Buddhists and other dissident sects, the priesthood had to admit that there was no caste-system in the beginning. The Vayu Purana says that King Vargabhumi created Varna system in Treta Yuga (4.8). We find that the above pithy saying of Swamiji embodies his ideal of a future casteless and classless Indian society.

Then he boldly says, "A gentle yet clear brushing of the cobwebs of the so-called Aryan theory and all its vicious corollaries is therefore absolutely necessary, especially for the South, and a proper self-respect created by a knowledge of the past grandeur of one of the great ancestors of the Arya race—the great Tamilian. We stick, inspite of Western theories, to that definition of the word 'Arya', which we find in our sacred books, and which includes only the multitude we now call Hindus."

It is a historical necessity that we must clear the imperialist cobweb of the Aryan theory. The Vedic people called themselves Aryas. There is an absolute difference between the Vedic concept *"Arya,"* the latter-day 'Arya' of the Sanskrit literature, and the European 'Aryan.' No somatic signi-

19. Hathigumpha inscription.

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ficance is attached to the original word. The Rig-Veda speaks of the black-skinned persons also as Aryas. There is no mention of a white-skinned, blue-eyed person in the Vedic literature.[20]

It is high time that we disabuse our mind regarding the concepts 'Arya' and 'Hindu'. Swami Dayananda long ago has protested against the name 'Hindu' applied to the descendants of the Vedic Aryas. We all are Aryas, either in language or in religion. Indian culture is primarily an Indo-Aryan culture. Of course, in the course of ages, outside influences have crept in. Indian people always have been receptive to foreign ideas. There have been infiltration of foreign blood even in the Vedic Period. Sylvain Levi discovered pre-Aryan and pre-Dravidian words in the Vedas. Jaimini and his annotator Kumarila give illustrations of *mleccha* (Arabic, Persian, Greek) words in Sanskrit language in their time.[21] The word 'Hindu' must be abolished, we all are Aryas irrespective of caste, color or creed.

Then he concludes that as Vedantins and Sannyasins, they are proud of all the races as being their ancestors. He clearly enunciates that out of the crucible called "India" we have come who are called Indians by the Europeans, Hindus by the ancient foreign Mohammedans, Hindis by the modern foreign Mohammedans. Self-respect of the independent Indians necessitates to assert themselves as *Aryas*. Swamiji suggests it, the dialectics of independent India demands it.

In 1900 Swamiji gave two lectures at Pasadena Shakespeare Club on Ramayana and Mahabharata. In concluding the lecture on Ramayana, he says: "Rama and Sita are the ideals of the Indian nation.....The height of a woman's ambition is to be like Sita, the pure, the devoted, the all-suffering...For the race, Sita stands as the ideal of suffering. The West says, 'Do show your power by 'doing.' India says,

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20. Vide B. N. Datta: "Vedic Ethnology" in "Dialectics of Hindu Rituallism", pt. I.
21. Vide: "Tantravartika".

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'Show your power by suffering.'.....Sita is typical of India".[22]

Sita is a creation of the mediaeval culture of India, as both the epics have got new recensions in the mediaeval era. The ideal of Sita still holds good in India. But in the portrayal of Sita as unjustly and ungrudgingly suffering from the hands of her husband who inflicted this for the sake of custom and people's clamour, we find an androcentric ideal of life. Man is the centre of power, woman's will is subordinate to man. But in her last day, Sita revolted and invoked the aid of her mother-Earth who engulfed her!

But today New India is orienting itself to a newer ideal. The Indian Constitution has given political equality to man and woman alike, an attempt is being made through the Legislation to give legal equality to woman, which she has lost since the days of the Rig-Veda (2. 17. 7). Now-a-days, we are having woman legislators, statesmen, etc. Thus, much water has flown down the bridge of Indian history since Swami Vivekananda penned down these sentences.

As regards the delineation of Mahabharata, he says, "Thus ends the story of the Mahabharata, setting forth in a sublime poem the triumph of virtue and defeat of vice." Lastly, he says, "In fact, Ramayana and the Mahabharata are the two encyclopaedias of the ancient Aryan life and wisdom, portraying an ideal civilization, which humanity has yet to aspire after."[23] Indeed, both these two epics are the propaganda literature of the Gupta era. Swamiji's disciple, Sister Nivedita has pointed that out very clearly in the case of Mahabharata.

Again, from the discovered notes found among Swamiji's papers, the following ideas which crossed his mind can be culled out[24]:

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22. Works: Vol. IV, pp. 71.
23. Ibid: pp. 96-97.
24. Ibid: pp. 254-256.

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"1. Bold has been my message to the people of the West. Bolder to those at home.

* * *

3. The survey—it is not true that the Indians have degenerated.

4. The problem here has been as it has been everywhere else,—the assimilation of various races, but nowhere has it been so vast as here.

5. Community of language, government and, above all, religion have been the power of fusion."

—The opinion of the modern sociologists is, that all of these items are not necessary for building up a nationality. Religion alone has never been a bond of unity anywhere in the world.[25]

6. In other lands this has been attempted by 'force'.

7. In India, on the other hand, the attempts have been as gentle as the problems vast, and from the earliest times, the customs, and especially the religions, of the different elements tolerated."

—This is absolutely true in the case of the Indian legislators. They have repeatedly warned the kings not to disturb the beliefs and customs of the subjects. That is the reason why we have got such a bizarre set of customs. Yet, Gautama and Kumarila had been intolerant in this matter. They opined that nothing can be tolerated which is not in consonance with the Veda — an echo of the story about the command of the Arab Khalif to general Amru regarding the Alexandrian Library!

"9. A common language would be a great desideratum, but the same criticism applies to it, the destruction of the vitality of the various existing ones."

—To-day, the same criticism has arisen regarding universalizing Hindi at the cost of the more developed provincial languages.

25. Vide discussion in Hugo Cunow: "Marxche Lehre der Gesellschaft".

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"10. The only solution to be reached was the finding of a great sacred language of which all the others would be considered as manifestations, and that was found in the Sanskrit."

—This has been suggested in present-day India, but found no universal favor. It has never been universal in the past, and never can be in future. Sanskrit, like ancient Greek, Latin, and classical Arabic, has got no chance of being the language of the masses in present-day world.

"12. A racial background was found,—the Aryas."

—We have discussed about it already. Whatever the Occidentals may define the racial concept of an Aryan, the concept of 'Arya' like the tortoise after the heels of Achilles runs through the pages of Indian history. We are Aryas.

"13. The speculation whether there was a distinct, separate race called the Aryas living in Central Asia to the Baltic.

14. The so-called types. Races were always mixed.

15. The 'blonde' and the 'brunette.'

16. .....The Aryas in their oldest records were in the land between Turkistan and the Punjab and N. W. Thibet.
17. This leads to the attempt at fusion between races and tribes of various degrees of culture."

—The latest biologists and anthropologists deny the existence of a race as such. Haddon, Huxley and others have given verdict against the immutability of a race. Michurinism upsets the old concept. We have already discussed about it previously. The U. N. E. S. C. O. in a pamphlet denies that there is such a thing as a race: Dr. Von Eickstedt, the authority on Indian anthropology in Germany says, that in late Ice Age, a proto-Mediterranean race lived on the Hindukush ridge which later on was named Indo-Aryans. He and Ripley call the Indians as Eastern Mediterraneans.

The jotting down of these points reveals to us how accurately

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Swamiji was *encourant* with the anthropological problems of his time.

"18. Justly as Sanskrit has been the linguistic solution, so the Arya the racial solution. So the Brahmanhood is the solution of the varying degrees of progress and culture as well as that of all social and political problems.

19. The great ideal of India—Brahmanhood.

20. Property-less, self-less, subject to no laws, no king except the moral."

—These pious wishes of Swamiji are only ideational ones, We have already said that there is no chance of classical Sanskrit becoming the vehicle of national unity. An artificial sanskritic Hindi is being foisted on the people to cement their bond of union into a homogeneous nationality, yet dialectical contradictions are cropping up against it. Swamiji was cognizant of the difficulty about it. We have referred to it before.

As regards Brahmanhood as the solution of all social and political problems, we are doubtful about it. India since the demise of Swamiji is slowly moving towards bourgeois-democratic civilization. Independent India is industrializing herself. The raising of the standard of living of the masses is the attempt that is being made by the National Government. India is in the midst of a capitalistic expansion.

Again, Brahmanhood, as Swamiji visualizes, is a historical myth. The "Dasa Brahman Jataka" speaks of nineteen kinds of Brahmans who are given to any kind of occupation. Of course, it mentions ideal religious Brahmans as well. But scholarly and pious Brahmans and non-Brahmans are yet to be found in India in galore. Again, it is not a fact that a Brahman is exempt from capital punishment. Kautilya's injunction is that for anti-state act, a Brahman is liable to capital punishment. This ideational wish on the part of Swamiji is the product of his environmental education when India was in fetters. At that time, the patriotic Indians used

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to brag about their high ideal in contrast with the ruling people.

"27. The attempt in Babylonia of making all the Bels merge in Bell-Merodach,—the attempt of the Israelists to merge all the Molochs in the Moloch Yavah or Yahu.

* * *

"29. Monotheism like absolute monarchy is quick in executing orders, and a great centralization of force, but it grows no farther, and its worst feature is its cruelty and persecution. All nations coming within its influence perish very soon after a flaring up of a few years.

30. In India the same problem presented itself—the solution found—*Ekam Sadat Bipra Bahudha Badanti* (He is one, the sages call him differently).

31. The result is that wonderful toleration of the Vedantist.

32. The great problem therefore is to harmonize and unify without destroying the individuality of these various elements."

—History testifies that when the primitive tribes coalesce, their gods coalesce as well. This kind of evolution, according to the present-writer, also happened in the Rig-Vedic Age. What Max Mueller said "Henotheism" or "Kathenotheism" was nothing but the coalescence of the tribal gods. Latterly, when the Indo-Aryans of the Rig-Vedic Period united into a people, then the Rishis realized that the tribal gods viz., Indra, Varuna, Matarishya are one. Here, we must not forget that the original Vedic Aryans were composed of five tribes (*Pancha Janah*) only.[26] But in the Upanishads, which were written in an Oligarchical Republican State or in States with "check and balance" system of government to control the monarch, all the tribal gods were set aside and the concept of "One without a second" Parabrahman was evolved. But

26. Vide B. N. Datta: "Vedic Ethnology" in "Dialectics of Hindu Ritualism", pt. I.

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the time-lag between the Rig-Veda and the Upanishads was immense. In between a monotheistic creed of "Brahma cult" had taken its rise. This was overshadowed later on by Buddhism and also by Parabrahman concept. Yet it must be said here, this "One without a second" is not homologous with the Hebrew Jehovah and Arabic Allah. It is Pantheism pure and simple. That is the reason why the Hindus can tolerate anything.

"36. It (India) was fully conscious and vigorous in old days, and less so of late; in this sense alone we have degenerated.
37. This is going to be in the future..... The future India, the youngest and most glorious of the nations of earth as well.

38. The way—we will have to work. Social customs as barriers, some as founded upon the Smritis. But none from the Srutis. The Smritis must change with time. This is the admitted law."
—That the Smritis must change is admitted by all intelligent persons except those of vested interests who make fetish of the texts written in the period of slavery. A perusal of the history of Dharmashastras clearly visualizes the gradual change of the social laws of India. Indian law is based on custom. But *paripassu* the trend of evolution of the social institutions, customs and institutions have changed.[27] A new Smriti legislation is the desideratum. But only a king can promulgate it. The Smritis of the old and the Nibandhas of latter-days had ruling monarchs or some princes as patrons. It is they who helped to introduce the new legislation. To-day, in the Indian Republic, sovereignty lies with the people. Hence, the people through their legislatures can promulgate new social laws.

"42. Renunciation—Renouncers—the national call."
—No people can rise to its height without renunciation. It is through the renunciation of the national workers that India has become independent and advancing further

27. Consult P. Kane: "History of Dharmasastras", also Dr. C. R. Hazra, "Studies in Pauranic Records".

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towards higher goal. India still demands renunciation from her sons for further advancement. In the time of Swamiji selfless, sacrificing, political *sanyasis* were unknown. Workers for public cause were rare. For that reason perhaps, Swamiji always harped on renunciation on the part of the youngmen by becoming monks as the only desideratum. But it is the political sanyasis who helped to bring India out of her long Babylonian captivity.

Then in "Introduction" of the book which was not completed Swami Vivekananda says, "We all hear so much about the degradation of India. There was a time when I also believed in it..... Thou blessed land of the Aryas, thou wast never degraded. I stand in awe before the unbroken procession of scores of shining centuries, with here and there a dim link in the chain, only to flare up with added brilliance in the next, and there she is walking with her own majestic steps—my motherland—to fulfil her glorious destiny, which no power in earth or heaven can check—the regeneration of man the brute into man the God."

—Thus he visualized the history of culture of India which according to the latest investigations was never interrupted. The Scythian or Kushan, Turkish or Mughal rules did not interrupt the march of cultural events in the Indian history.[28] Indian history is one and indivisible. Finally, he speaks with prophetic vision about the future destiny of India. It is for the free sons of India to work that out.

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28. J. E. Van Locinzen de Leeuev: "Scythian Period", 1949. He says: "we have pleaded for a continuity not only in politics but also in cultural life, and we think that especially the last continuity is an argument in favor of that in first case." (P. 321). Then he says, that "there is not a single indication as to a *hiatus* in the transitional period in the matter of culture between the Kushana and Gupta periods." (P. 322).

Again, Dr. A. Coomaraswamy says regarding Mughal art: "It is unnecessary here to discuss in detail the Rajput elements present in true Mughal painting....These Indian elements are apparent in several directions". Vide "History of Indian and Indonesian Art", p. 128, 1927.

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# X

## SWAMI VIVEKANANDA : RELIGIOUS VIEWS

Thomas Carlyle in his famous book called "Heroes and Hero-worship" has laid great stress on the role of heroes. It made a great impression on good many thinking men of the time. He called the great men as the "beginners" of a new epoch. The great Russian thinker and revolutionist Plekhanov says that a great man is great because "he possesses qualities which make most capable of serving the great social needs of his time, needs which arise as a result of general and particular causes. A great man is precisely a *beginner*, because he sees further than others and desires things more strongly than others."[1] Thus we understand the role of a great man, an epoch-maker, who sees ahead of time and prophesises about the future. But a great man cannot remain isolated from the masses. He must have strength to foresee the course of history and to organize the masses accordingly. It is the people who raise him up for his ability and action.

Discussing about the role of man in society, Plekhanov says after citing illustrations from European History, that "by virtue of particular traits of their character, individuals can influence the fate of society. Sometimes this influence is very considerable, but the possibility of exercising this influence, and its extent, are determined by the form of organization of society, by the relation of forces written. The character of an individual is a 'factor' in social development only where, when, and to the extent that social relations permit it to be such."[2]

In this connection, the question has been raised, that does the social change called a "new epoch" transform itself by being

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1. L. Sharkey and S. Meston: 'Dialectical and Historical Materialism', p. 123. 1945.
2. Ibid., Op. cit., p. 141.

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impelled by economic conditions only? Does it move on its own accord? In this matter, Plekhanov says, "Bismarck said that we cannot make history and must wait while it is being made". Here Plekhanov asks, "But who makes history? It is made by the social man, who is its sole factor." The social man creates his own, i.e., social relationships. No great man can foist on society relations which no longer conform to the state of these forces, or which do not yet conform to them. In this sense, indeed, he cannot make history, and in this sense, he would advance the hands of his clocks in vain, he would not hasten the passage of time, nor turn it back. Even in the height of his power Bismarck could not cause Germany to revert to natural economy."[3] Finally, he says, "The more or less slow changes in 'economic conditions' periodically confront society with the necessity of more or less rapidly changing its institutions. This change never takes place 'by itself', it always needs the intervention of men, who are thus confronted with great social problems. And it is those men who do more than others to facilitate the solution of these problems who are called great men."[4]

Thus society does not move by itself. Social phenomenon is continually in the process of becoming. But it requires cognition to understand that phenomenal process. He who understands that process and can mould it is the epoch-maker. Thus the role of the individual in history is an indisputed fact. In this way, we see that the role of man in society is an accepted fact. Society is not a static mass. It is moving and changing. The anthropologists by their researches have discovered the different phases of the evolution of human society. With economic advancement, society progresses to a higher cultural level. In this situation man's ideology changes, naturally he gets a new world-view, with this intellectual change his ideas concerning world modifies. The

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3. How correct is this view *vis-a-vis* Gandhistic attempt to revert to cottage industry and the stage of domestic economy, and the present-day "Five Year Plan", also the break-neck effort to reach High Capitalistic period in India!

4. Ibid: Op. cit., p. 152.

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anthropologists also have discovered that the religious concepts of a given people are modified by their external environment. Truly, the German philosopher Feuerbach while discussing about Christ, has come to the notable conclusion that religion represents the inverted picture and imaginary satisfaction of the real interests of man. Hence, he called for a religion of man in place of God.[5] He proves that the Christian God is only a fantastic reflexion, a mirror-image of man.[6]

As there has been much in common between ancient and mediaeval Germany and India, and as nineteenth century German scholars have been the best exponents of mediaeval Indian Ideology, we should digress a little bit about the German Ideology of the nineteenth century in order to understand the analogous effect in Indian thought. The German savants, Karl Marx and F. Engels, in reviewing the German Ideology of the nineteenth century say: "The entire body of German philosophical criticism from Strauss to Stirner is confined to criticism of religious conceptions. The critics started from real religion and actual theology. Their advance consisted in *subsuming*[7] the allegedly dominant metaphysical, political, juridical, moral, and other conceptions under the class of religious or theological conceptions; and similarly in pronouncing political, juridical, moral consciousness as religious or theological, and political, juridical moral man—'man' in the last resort—as religious. The dominance of religion was taken for granted. Gradually every dominant relationship was pronounced a religious relationship and transformed into a cult, a cult of law, a cult of state, etc. On all sides it was only a question of dogmas and belief in dogmas."[8] How true is this criticism when applied to the ideology of the Indian patriot-apologists!

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5. 'The Essence of Christianity', By L. Feuerbach.
6. F. Engels' "Ludwig Feuerbach", p. 46. (Burmon Publishing House).
7. A German logical term used in English which means "to include as a member within a class".
8. Marx and Engels: "German Ideology", p. 4. (Burmon Publishing House).

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The Indian apologists of newly arisen nineteenth century bourgeoisie in order to fight the arrogance of the ruling group, began to sing pæans in honour of their past. Not being able to compete with the rulers, as their civilization being based on agricultural economy began to crumble under the competitive forces of industrial civilization, and their culture being under the cross-fire of the same attack, the Indian patriots as contradistinction to the culture of the rulers, began to interpret the civilization of their ancestors as wholly spiritual and devoid of materialistic influence. They began to say that theirs is a spiritual civilization, and all sorts of cultural activities were "sub-sumed" within the class of religious conceptions. In a word, they began to put forth the idea that as Indian civilization is a spiritual one, all the activities of the Hindus are under the spiritual domination. That is their speciality in contrast with the materialistic civilization of the West.

The mediaeval religious texts of the Brahmanical priesthood also show that tendency. But the Indian scholars do not realize that in the Middle Ages, the same process took its rise in the West as well. When the priesthood is the only learned group and a part of the dominant class, and there is a religious symbiosis between statecraft and the priestcraft, then it is natural that the class-interest of the priesthood will *subsume* every intellectual activity under its own class ideology—theology. And the ruling class, to safeguard its exploitation, would acquiesce in it. For this reason, in India the king is the protector of four-varna system. This gives the impression that the Indo-Aryans of past ages were nothing but religious maniacs! They had nothing but religion as the objective of life, as other-worldliness had been their motto! This has been a pleasing dream to lull the mind against foreign onslaught.[9] Of course,

9. In independent India this supine mentality is being expressed in the cry of *Ahimsa*. When all the advanced nations of the world are busying themselves with the application of atomic energy in practical life, the interested ruling class of India is talking of "non-violence" as the ancient basis of Indian civilization. Their impotency of brain-power is being cloaked in this way. What a travesty of truth of Indian history!



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all these talks were before the discovery of Vatsayana's 'Kamasutras', the dramas of Bhasa, the Artha-shastras of Kautilya and Kamandaka-niti. Again, Sukranitisar was also not discovered in that time.

Indian civilization so long has been based on agricultural economy. Hence, in the remote past, the sages have talked of vapoury Pantheism; in the mediaeval period, they sang pastoral idylls as their religious experiences. Thus, in the mediaeval ages, the Rasalila, Holi, Vrindabana-lila became the processes of religion exercises.[10] On the other hand, when the mighty Maurya Empire arose in post-Buddha era, and again the mighty Vardhana and Pala Empires arose in mediaeval era, the exploiting class contemplated on the "great compassionate one", while the masses were left to work out their salvation by spinning out the law of Karma in this life and hereafter following the resulting effect, in transmigration of soul. Thus the exploited masses were lulled to stupefaction and inaction.

Again, we find as an effect of the tyranny of the Gupta emperors, the doctrine of *Niyati* (Fate) was virulently expounded in the Mahabharata,—a handmaid of Gupta imperialism. Here, it is noteworthy to say that the "Yogavasistha Ramayana" which alleges to be the latter part of the epic Ramayana, speaks vigorously of *Purushakara* (Prowess), denounces *Niyati* doctrine. According to the research scholars, the book cannot have been written earlier than 700 A.D. as Sankaracharya did not mention this book in his text. It will be interesting to know the period, the locality and the environment in which this book was written. Free will implied in Prowess is extolled in this book.[11]

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10. What are the Historic-Materialistic background in the difference between the pre-mediaeval "Rasalila" written by the poet Bhasa, and the "Raspanchadhyaya" text of the Pancharatra Cult! It is an interesting theme of dialectical study. The same can be said about the local "Holaka" festival of the East which now-a-days has become the religious festival of all-India.

11. This book is admired in foreign countries. A Persian gentleman met the writer at Berlin in 1922. The first question that was asked by him was: "Have you read Yogavasistha?" It seems he read it in

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Strange it is, that the fact of Historical-Dialectical-Materialism is persistently ignored by our scholars. We have already seen that the religious ideas are the inverted reflections of the mundane world of the time. Naturally, Indian ideology is changing *paripassu* the material change of the country. With this preamble, let us try to understand the religious ideas of Swami Vivekananda. At the outset, it must be said that too much has been made of Swami Vivekananda's connection with the Brahmo Samaj. There was a time when Brahmo ideology infiltrated into the minds of the bourgeois intellectuals. All the young students more or less were imbued with the ideas of religious and social reforms. There was a time when Keshubchandra Sen was an unique all-India leader. The young men of Bengal, more or less, were influenced by him. Therefore, it was not unnatural that young Narendranath, still in his teens, would have visited the Brahmo Samaj and being an expert singer, would be asked to join the choir of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj. It is a fact that at that time he became an ardent monotheist of the Brahmo Samaj type. He also became a member of the 'Band of Hope' group founded by Keshubchandra Sen to wean away the youngmen from the path of smoking, drinking, etc.[12]

But he met Ramakrishna when he was still in his teens. It is said that after a long contact with Ramakrishna he acknowledged the feasibility of worshipping God in an image. It is a question whether he clearly understood the implication of monotheism, its role in cultural history of man. When he accepted the tenet of Ramakrishna that God can be worshipped in an external form, he acknowledged pantheistic belief of his ancestors. The fact is, that by joining the Brahmo Samaj and worshipping an imported foreign God in a Hindu garb, there had been rather a lapse with him from his ancestral

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Persian, because he said that the Upanishadas have been translated in his language.

12. Testified by late Satischandra Mukhopadhyaya of "Dawn Society", who was a class-mate of Swami Vivekananda and also a member of the "Band of Hope". He narrated it before some members of the aforementioned society.

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faith. Thus, from Ramakrishna he learnt that God can be worshipped as without form (*Nirakara*), also with form (*Sakara*). This is the teaching of Vishnupurana, while the Brahmasutras, popularly called the Vedanta-Shastra say that the ignorant can worship through a symbol. On the other hand, we have already seen that Ramakrishna himself admitted that God can be as well worshipped as a formless one. He condescended that the Brahmo Samaj is also a *Yana* (vehicle) for attaining God. Thus there is a compromise, there is no violent change in either way. On the other hand, Swamiji's biographers say, that "Brahmo Samaj.....seemed too radical to him in the latter period of his life."[13] This is the psycho-analysis behind the cause that led those who left the Brahmo movement and joined Ramakrishna.

Now, the question is, did he accept the mediaeval ideology and its institutions? In our perusal of his works, we find that he did. When one accepts *Sanyasa* (monkhood) and directs his life accordingly to the ideology of the order, he must strictly follow its regulations. This he did. Mediaevalism in foreign-ruled India had its charm. Especially, when the civilization of the country is still under mediaeval influence, and the society is still under feudal basis, the lure of the past is greater than the attraction to Theodore Parkar's "Sermons". The lure is still greater when there is a threatening foreign rule with its myrmidons attempting to crush the time-hallowed Indian culture. A patriotic mind with a veneration for the past glory of his motherland, cannot remain callous and indifferent to the achievement of his forbears. The dialectical antithesis between the past glory of one's motherland and the present helpless subserviency of the country and void in national life, will prompt a patriot to turn back affectionately towards the deeds of his forefathers. It was Keshubchandra Sen himself who was looking back with respectful eyes towards mediaevalism when he inaugurated his "New Dispensation"! Again, actuated by the same charm, later, several stalwarts of the Brahmo Samaj and several of its zealous

13. "The Life of Swami Vivekananda", Vol. I, p. 207.

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preachers seceded from the Samaj and became the founders of sects of their own. Another noteworthy illustration is Arabinda Ghose, a scion of an old Brahmo family, and brought up in England since he was six years old. After coming in contact with nationalism he took *mantram* from a sadhu and became a Hindu Yogi and the protagonist of "Bhawani Mandir" scheme! The same is the case with a quondam anglicized Indian Barrister, M. K. Gandhi, who in his later life, as the champion of the freedom of India, leaned much on mediaevalism. Thus Swami Vivekananda is not an exceptional phenomenon. The same is the case with the Moslem leaders who leaned towards their mediaeval ideologies for inspiration.

In a country passing through a period of transition, when the ancient agricultural economy is giving way to industrial economy, when the feudal form of society is being pounded to give a bourgeois-democratic structure, the interpenetration of dialectical opposites is sure to take place. Hence those men who work in this maelstrom of thought are hard to be understood; they have complexes as they are born and brought up in the midst of transition. A respectful feeling for national past cannot remain satisfied with Indianized Unitarian church and society. The society generated by the reform movement of the Brahmo Samaj, became the *replica* of English middle class society with its ideas and tastes. The Brahmo Samaj reformers were mostly recruited from the services of the British-Indian Government. As such, they are only the petty-bourgeoisie of the country. When there was no industrial forces to break up the old order, no industrial bourgeoisie to sustain the necessary ideology for its support, then how can the petty-bourgeois reformers dream of universalizing their ideal in the country? Concerning the change of ideology in the latter part of the nineteenth century in India, we quote a parallel from the European ideological history as delineated by F. Engels. He, in criticising the philosopher Feuerbach says thus: "History is nothing but the succession of the separate generations, each of which exploits the materials, the forms of capital,

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the productive forces handed down to it by all preceding ones, and thus on the one hand continues the traditional activity in completely changed circumstances and, on the other, modifies the old circumstances with a completely changed activity."[14] It is evident that this historical-materialistic condition absolutely failed in India at the time of the Reform Movement.

Then Marx and Engels say: "The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas i.e., the class, which is the ruling material force of society, is at the same time its ruling intellectual force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it. The ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relationships, grasped as ideas, hence of the relationships which make the one class the ruling one, therefore the ideas of its dominance. The individuals composing the ruling class possess among other things consciousness, and therefore think. In so far as they rule as a class and determine the extent and compass of an epoch.....hence among other things rule also as thinkers, as producers of ideas and regulate the production and distribution of the ideas of their age."[15] Thus the writers say, "their ideas are the ruling ideas of the epoch."[16]

What a succinct but a clear historical-materialistic analysis of the rise and spread of dominant ideology of a country in a particular epoch! Applying this analysis, we see that it fits the history of the past and present of India. In the nineteenth century, India was the land of exploitation of British Imperialism. The material forces were at their command. Naturally, the ideas of the ruling class became the ruling ideas. They interpenetrated in the Indian mind through and through. Since then, we are looking at Indian

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14, 15, 16. Marx and Engels: "German Ideology", pp. 29; 30; 30.

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things with that borrowed vision. The reform movements are the products of this interpenetration. But these movements have got no bases for their sustenance. The reformers were not the ruling class, hence their ideas could not be dominant. The reformers were over-shadowed by the ideas of the ruling class. But all honor to them. They have awakened the sleeping people, as Swami Vivekananda said: "Those galvanic shocks aroused the sleeping leviathan." Much of the reform movements impelled by the force of Historic-Materialism and sustained by the petty-bourgeois class has achieved a good deal of success in the long run. Its program of social reform, more or less has become a part of the Indian petty-bourgeois life.

The wailing that monotheism did not push ahead among the masses due to the revival, is a misspent one. Religious belief is not a simple case of faith. Idolatry has got psychological, sociological and economic aspects. These things are to be considered before we see their disappearance. The so-called Hindus were not idolatrous before 400 A.D. The epigraphic records testify it. Afterwards, it was backed by the ruling power that be. It is a question of historical discussion and we have discussed it elsewhere.

Further, to clarify our mind regarding the wailing that revival as reaction checked the Reform Movement and a great setback took place in Indian Society and Culture, we again draw a parallel from the history of modern Europe. In this matter Engels says: "The ineradicability of the Protestant heresy corresponded to the invincibility of the rising bourgeoisie, when the bourgeoisie had become sufficiently strengthened, its struggle against the feudal nobility..... began to assume national dimensions. The first great action in Germany—the so-called Reformation..... But besides the German, Luther, appears the Frenchman, Calvin, with true French acumen he put the bourgeois character of the reformation in the forefront, republicanised and democratised the Church. While the Lutheran reformation in Germany degenerated and reduced the country to wrack and ruin, the Calvinist reformation served as a banner for the republicans

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in Geneva, in Holland and in Scotland, freed Holland from Spain and from the German Empire and provided the ideological costume for the second act of the bourgeois revolution which took place in England."[17] Then he concludes the argument thus: "We see, therefore: religion, once framed, always contains traditional material. Just as in all ideological domains tradition forms a great conservative force. But the transformations which this material undergoes spring from class relations, that is to say, out of the economic relations of the persons who execute these transformations."[18]

From this pithy sayings of Engels we see that the historical materialistic basis of Protestant Reformation of Europe, lacked in India of the nineteenth century. There was no ruling Bourgeoisie to back up the Indian Reformation, and class-relations totally failed as there was no class to transform the economic relations in its favor and to justify the transformation, to mould the religious and the social ideologies in its favor. We have repeatedly argued that ideological interpretation has got its basis in interest.

In this matter, we again cite the past: Those of the Indians who took monotheistic religions from their foreign conquerors, had to accept it by the power of force or other interests equally powerful. Again, among those Indians who borrowed monotheism from Islam, only Sikhism survived as a distinct religion and sect because it was backed by political and in latter days by royal power; while the others have more or less been absorbed in the bosom of Orthodoxy. Prannath's reform movement of eclectic Monotheism comprising Hindu, Moslem, Jew, Christian, Zoroastrian ideas in the eighteenth century Guzerat has relapsed to orthodoxy of Hinduism.[19] The same has been the fate in the case of the reforming sects of the nineteenth century. Being a movement mainly of the petty-bourgeoisie, and not being backed by the ruling class, and its class-relations being subserviency

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17-18. "Ludwig Feuerbach", pp. 70-71.
19. Vide Barthwal: "Nirguna Philosophy in Hindi Literature."

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to the service of that class or other petty-bourgeois economic interests, the movement could not thrive and become a dominant force in the country. On the other hand, its petty-bourgeois class-relations made it reactionary and stagnant as regards wide national interests are concerned.[20]

Here we should remember what the great Unitarian philosopher James Martinean told Pandit Shivnath Sastri when he visited him in England: "Somehow men do not stay with us..... Give us a little of your mysticism and take from us a little of our practical genius." Thus dialectics of Historical-Materialism must be clearly understood before mud-slinging is done.

It is to be admitted here, that Swami Vivekananda like many persons of a transitional period had a complex character. His biographers admit that he had a "complex character." Thus they say: "The Swami Vivekananda was a life of striking contrasts and moods of infinite variety, which confounded even his friends at times, as has been stated before."[21] As regards his religious views, in a letter written in 1894, he says: "we reject none, neither theist, nor pantheist, monist, polytheist, agnostic, nor atheist, the only condition of being a disciple is modelling a character at once the broadest and the most intense..... We leave everybody free to know, select and follow whatever suits and helps him.....we believe that every being is divine, is God..... Social laws were created by economic conditions under the sanction of religion. The terrible mistake of religion was to interfere in social matters..... We insist at the same time that religion has no right to become a social law-giver. Hands off! Keep yourself to your own bounds and everything would come out.....What business had the priests to inter-

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20. An interesting fact is narrated here. Sometimes between 1904-5 the Congressmen introduced a bill in the Imperial Assembly for compulsory primary education. But the great savant and Prarthana Samajist Dr. R. G. Bhandarkar as a member of the Legislature voted against it as he said, "it was putting the cart before the horse." He wanted reformation first to take place. He was praised by the British Press for it. A fitting sequel!
21. "The life," Vol. IV, Ch. CXLVII, p. 220.

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fere (to the misery of millions of human beings) in every social matters.

"You speak of the meat-eating Kshatriya; meat or no meat, it is they who are the fathers of all that is noble and beautiful in Hinduism. Who wrote the Upanishads? Who was Rama? Who was Krishna? Who was Buddha? Who was the Tirthankaras of Jainas? Whenever the Kshatriyas have preached religion, they have given it to everybody, and whenever the Brahmans wrote anything they would deny all right to others. Read the Gita and Sutras of Vyasa, or get some one to read them to you. In the Gita the way is laid open to all men and women, to all caste and colour, but Vyasa tries to put meanings upon the Vedas to cheat the poor Sudras. Is God a nervous fool like you that the flow of his river of mercy would be dammed up by a piece of meat? If such be He, His value is not a pie!

"Hope nothing from me, but I am convinced that India is to be saved by the Indians themselves. So you, youngmen of the motherland, can dozens of you become utmost fanatics over this new ideal? Take thought, collect materials, write a sketch of the life of Ramakrishna, *studiously avoiding all miracles.* The life should be written as an illustration of the doctrines he preached, only his,—do not bring me or any living persons into that. The main aim should be to give to the world what he taught, and the life as illustrating that..... Preach neither for nor against caste or any other social evil. Preach to let 'Hands off' and everything will come right."[22]

In this saying under the caption "What We Believe In" Swami Vivekananda is at his best. It is the quintessence of his religious creed. In this saying he embodied the essence of Hindu spirit which tolerates any opinion or belief within the body-politic of the society. Of course, the latest historical informations are, that in the past, as a result of sectarian spirit, there had been intolerance and persecutions. Even,

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22. Works: Vol. IV, pp. 302-306.

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as early as the days of the Upanishads, the tradition is that the great Kapila had to flee from Mithila and take shelter in lower Bengal, which is dotted with temples dedicated to him. Even his Ashrama is located at the mouth of the Ganges which is an all-India place of pilgrimage. But this Kapila, the expounder of Sankhya, is denounced by Sankaracharya as an Asura!

Then, he pits the nail on the head of Brahmanism, that the best of Hindu religion have been expounded by the Kshatriyas. It was the ruling class that developed and expounded the Indo-Aryan religion, with the exception that they foisted the Karma and Transmigration of Soul theories in it, and these are not to be found in the Rig-Veda—the fountain-head of Indo-Aryan religion and society. Perhaps these beliefs were current among the masses like other primitive peoples of the world. It helped in the exploitation of the people by the ruling class. And all the sects founded by the Kshatriyas accepted it.

It is a strange phenomenon of Indian history unnoticed by the historians, that after the extinction of the Kshatriya rule, and after the downfall of Buddhist political power, Brahmanism as the precursor of present-day Hinduism took its rise. Till the rise of Vakataka and Bharasiva Kings, circa 400 A.D., there has been no trace of image-worship in the temples. During this period of about 200 A.D.—400 A.D. Jaimini wrote his Purva Mimansa and Vadarayana wrote his Brahma Sutras. The latter treatise is alleged to have been written by Vyasa. In these treatises the priestly class began to be extolled. Truly Swamiji has said, that Vyasa has tried to exclude the poor Sudras from the study of the Vedas. Then came Sankaracharya who while annotating the aphorism of Vyasa on the King Janasruti of the Chhandogya Upanishad, affirmed that this King could not have been a Sudra, as the Sudras "are living corpses." They are outside the study for *Brahmajnana,* etc.

Truly, Swamiji has said that Kumarila, a commentator of Jaimini's text, Sankara and Ramanuja were the persons who attempted to foist the domination of the Brahman class over

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others. And all of them hailed from the South! He has called their movements as reactionary ones.[23] Thus with the disappearance of the Kshatriya rule and religion, the Brahmanical priestly class got dominance over the society with the help of the neo-Kshatriya rulers and latter on, with the help of the neo-Kshatriya Rajputs. Succinctly Swamiji has expressed the historical truth, that the priests have converted the foreigners to Hinduism and extended their sway over the people through these neo-converts, till all of them fell under the blow of the Turkish-Moslems. The illiberalism and narrowness of the Indo-Aryan people began to date from the period of the Vakataka-Gupta rulers.[24]

As regards asking to write a life of Ramakrishna avoiding the miracles, the contrary has taken place. Ramakrishna has been deified and portrayed in a mediaeval setting. All sorts of mediaeval miracle-mongering are attributed to Ramakrishna. Instead of true unsectarian import of Ramakrishna's life, attempt is being made to make him a Sanatanist Hindu with all Brahmanical prejudice regarding untouchability and mode of life. Ramakrishna nowadays is depicted by some of his disciples as a believer of "Don't touchism" against which Swami Vivekananda fought. Again, Swamiji asks his disciples to be indifferent to caste or any social evil. Elsewhere he has spoken against caste system and social evils. He was keenly alive to it. Indifferentism was his attitude regarding social questions. His motto was the line of least resistance. This is the spot where the reformers and the advanced thinkers have got bones to pick with him. They are at loggerheads with him in this point.

Finally, as regards including every sort of belief within his definition of Vedanta, as he said to some one regarding Fetishism of the Hottentots, that there is no such thing as fetishism,[25] we are inclined to say that, he took the same line

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23. Vide Works: Pt. VI, p. 135.
24. Vide for similar ideas in "Historical Evolution of India," Pt. VI, and "Reply to the Maharaja of Khetri," Pt. IV, pp. 265-276.
25. Nivedita: "The Master as I Saw Him."

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of argument as the right wing Hegelians. Hegel, while expounding his theory of dialectics, justified on the one hand, the Roman Catholic rites and ceremonies, and on the other, he justified the Protestant Prussian Police State! The orthodox Hindus justify every sort of religious belief as the case of *Adhikaribheda,* the question of capability of the devotee. But in this way, synthesis in religious field can never be brought.

Another great conception of Swamiji was to unify all the Hindus under one banner. That banner according to him was Vedanta. He says thus: 'The word Vedanta must cover the whole ground of Indian religious life.'[26] He argued that even the dissident sects like the Jainas and the Buddhists were the offsprings of the Upanishads. They believed in the *Ahimsa* Srutis. "Even in the philosophical writings of the Buddhists or Jainas, the help of *Srutis* is never rejected and at least in some of the Buddhistic scholars, and in the majority of the Jaina writings, the authority of the Srutis is fully admitted."[27] The Himsa Srutis were latter-day interpolations. There is a truth in this argument. There is no trace of sacrifice with animals in the Rig-Veda. The German scholar Grassmann pointed that out long ago. Swami Dayananda expressed the same belief. Following the wake of these scholars, the present-writer has pointed out that the *Apri* hymns that used to be sung at the time of the *Jagna* (sacrifice), do not speak of animal sacrifice.[28] But these are latter-day interpolations to foist the trace of animal sacrifice in the Veda. The Hymn of Dirghatamas on "Horse" (I. 162) is a bright example of it. Any person with a scrutinizing eye can find that out.

Of course, the white Yajur-Veda is full of sacrifices of all sorts of beings. But our scholars have not yet discovered that there is a vast difference between the time-lag of the Rig-Veda and that of the Yajur-Veda. The former was written at the time of chalcolithic stage of Indo-Aryan civilization, iron was unknown in that time, while Yajus speaks of *Krishnayas*—

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26. Works: Pt. III, p. 230; Pt. IV, pp. 277-299.
27. Ibid: Pt. IV, p. 280.
28. Vide B. N. Datta: "Dialectics of Hindu Ritualism," Pt. I, p. 230.

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iron. The geologists say, that iron was introduced in India in 1000 B.C. What a span of time had passed between the writings of these two texts! Naturally, there is enough ground of suspicion that with the development of latter-day sacrifices, justification was sought by inserting favorable hymns in the texts. "Sarpa-Sukta," a Gupta period forgery, is another illustration of the same effort.

Yet, it must be said that Jaimini in his "Purva-Mimansa" has said that the Jainas and the Buddhists have no connection with the Veda. Vadarayana or Vyasa in his Brahma Sutras agreed with him. Generally, the earlier Ajivikas, the Jainas and the Buddhists have been declared as unvedic by the Brahmanical priesthood. Yet, the great Orientalist Jacobi says that the conception of Jaina God is not dissimilar with the Upanishadic conception of Brahman.[29] One thing is clear that the Indian Jaina scholars opine that the Jaina God is not monotheistic! He is no creator. On the other hand, Nathuram Premi says that Jainism is atheistic.[30]

But the strange thing is that about ninth or tenth century A.D. there had been a tendency of Jainism to approximate towards Vedantic conception of divinity. The recently discovered "Pahuda-Doha" of Ramsinha Muni written about 1000 A.D. in *Apabhramsa* language, has got affinity with the *Caryapadas* of Sahajayani Buddhists in devotional aspects. The Pahuda-Doha speaks of Para-Brahman. It expresses Pantheistic ideas and it shows connection with Siva Cult. In this text we find that Jaina mysticism of this age approximates the Buddhist Sahajayanists and the Vedantists of the Shaiva Cult.

As regards Buddhism, this much is discovered that Mahayana approached Brahmanism in many respects. Swamiji says that the views of "Pragnaparamita" agree with the Vedantic views of Sankara. Again, Panchadasi says, "what we call Brahman is the same truth as the Sunya of the Buddhists."[31]

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29. S. B. E. Vol. XIV, Gaina Sutras.
30. "Jaina Sahitya aur Itihasa," p. 564 (in Hindi).
31. Vide Works: Pt. VI, p. 180.

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The Buddha was the "Purushottoma", "Lokapita". Besides these metaphysical parallelism there is no trace of approximation between the Buddhists and the Vedantists in the matter of accepting Veda or Vedanta as the guide to religious exercises. Of course, the latter-day *Sunyabada* of Nagarjuna became the *Mayavada* of Sankara who again in latter days used to be denounced by the Ramanujists as a "Buddhist in disguise." Again, the *Advayasiddhi* of the Sahajayanist Buddhists, according to Princess Lakshimkara, was "worship of the body where all the gods dwelt."

Apart from the dissenting sects of antiquity, mediaeval and of modern times, all the sects have for their scripture the Brahma Sutras popularly known as the Vedanta Darshan. Hence, Swamiji was right in his attempt at synthetising all the sects under the name of Vedanta. His attempt was to unify all the Hindu sects under one banner which is Vedanta. To him, the Jainas and the Buddhists were also Hindus. Again as the Moslem Sufis betray monistic influence, they approximate Vedanta. Of course the aforesaid two sects were parts of Indo-Aryan religious experiences which had as their fountain-head, the Veda. One people, one religion was the ideal of Swamiji. His biographers say, his hope for India was "An Islamic body with a Vedantic heart." But an exception was taken to it in latter days by some Moslem League stalwarts, that, that means Hindu insinuation of Moslem inferiority! But the biographers explain it thus: "Or put otherwise, the spirit of a democratic and unified consciousness, impelled and actuated by the highest spiritual ideals."[32] Of course it has been mentioned already that as Sufiism in some of its dogmas and practices approximate Vedanta, Swamiji counted, that those factors would remove the friction between the two sects. In fact, Swamiji admired Islamic democratic and aggressive spirit. He wanted to instil that spirit in Hinduism. Sister Nivedita testifies to it.[33]

Again to a Mohammedan friend of his he writes: ".....our

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32. "The Life," Vol. II, p. 261.
33. "The Master as I Saw Him."

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experience is that if ever the followers of any religion approach to this equality in an appreciable degree in the plane of practical work-a-day life....it is those of Islam and Islam alone. Therefore we are firmly persuaded that without the help of practical Islam, theories of Vedantism.....are entirely valueless to the vast mass of mankind. We want to lead mankind to the place where there is neither the Vedas nor the Bible, nor the Koran;.....Mankind ought to be taught that religions are but the varied expressions of the *Religion,* which is Oneness, so that each may choose the path that suits him. For our own motherland a junction of the two great systems, Hinduism and Islam—Vedanta brain and Islam body—is the only hope."[34] In this letter he explains what he meant by "Islamic body." It is the democratic equalitarian social-polity that Swamiji wanted for Hinduism.

Such a bold conception was thought out by Swami Dayananda as well. He tried to give a new monotheistic interpretation of the Veda. But he did not provide the inclusion of the non-Hindus in his scheme of reformation. It must be said that the method of interpretation of Dayananda was not a historical one. Swami Vivekananda did not deny the historical processes of the evolution of the Indo-Aryan religious experiences. He wanted to syncretise them as different experiences of the devotees in different stages and moods. Finally what he wished was according to his own saying, "what we want is Dynamic Religion."[35]

But all attempts of the religious leaders to build up new India either through orthodox religion or through reformation failed because there was no state power to back it. In this connection it must be said here, that it is quite depressing to read in the sayings of Ramakrishna and of Swami Vivekananda that too much stress is laid on celibacy and monkhood. In his call for renunciation and to lead a monastic life, did Swamiji want to convert the whole of India to be

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34. "Letters of Swami Vivekananda," p. 427.
35. Works: Pt. VIII, p. 415. Letter to Sister Nivedita.

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turned into a vast monastery? It is painful to record that there is hatred of the Hindu sanyasis against womankind and against the house-holder. Dattatreya, in his "Avadhuta Gita" has denounced woman limb by limb. Sankaracharya in one of his poems has said, "What is the door to Hell—woman." Yogavasistha Ramayana has also denounced woman. Of course, hurling of these abuses on woman is similar with the abuses of the early Christian monks against woman as the "tempter of man." Here we remind the remarks of Mr. Bouquet that in the Middle Ages, Roman Catholic Christianity, Mahayana Buddhism and Brahmanism arrived at the same level of spiritual culture.[35] But all these anti-woman spirit generate from androcentric view of life. The question is, were not these monk-saints themselves sons of women. And if all the Indians were to turn into monks, then how these men of the society, doing no productive labor, are to be maintained? If the house-hold life is so sinful, then who will maintain these worthies who are after *Moksha* for themselves?

The Brahmanical orthodoxy is against monkhood. It advocates *Chaturasrama* polity. One should be recluse or a *Jati* at the end period of his life. That is the ideal that is given in the "Ashramavasika Parva" of the Mahabharata. How refreshing are the stories as given in the Rig-Veda, where the householder and his wife both joined at the sacrificial worship! Again, how edifying it is to the national mind when one reads of a woman named Indrasena Mudgalini (X. 102.11) rescues her cattle by fighting and driving the chariot herself, when queen Vispala (I. 115.15) loses the lower part of one of her legs by standing by the side of her husband on the battle-field, when one hears of hosts of women composers of hymns (*Rishikas*) like Kakshivati (X. 39), Godha (X. 134), Visvabara (V. 28), also the Upanishadic *Brahmavadinis* like Gargi! Woman was not "door to Hell" in those days!

It is nauseating to hear of extolling monachism and

35. Bouquet: "Comparative Religion."



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denouncing household life in modern time. On the other hand, Lala Tahalram Gangaram in 1904-5 came to Calcutta to reclaim the seven millions of idle and ignorant sadhus to turn them into useful members of the society. In 1926-7 he wrote the present-writer from his home to take up the same cause in the Youth Movement that was started in the country in that time. He did not forget his mission. Again, the present Prime Minister of the Indian Union, complains that in this dire economic distress of the country, there are five millions of sadhus who are the drones of the society.

The fact is that India was not saved "by the begging bowl of the Sanyasi." Swamiji forgot his own historic saying: "The Buddha killed the Hindus, and Christ the Romans." When he advocated monasticism and celebacy he forgot, that Sankara has been denounced by the Ramanujists and the Brahmans as, "a Buddhist in disguise." He forgot that what he was advocating was psychologically nothing but Buddhism in another form. He did not realize that historically, present-day Hinduism is nothing but an amalgam of Buddhism and Brahmanical priestcraft, intertwined with totemistic belief of taboo as the notion of purity arising out of the class-character of the observant, and this mixture ushered in the name of Pauranic Indo-Aryan religion. He did not realize that the core of present-day Hinduism is Buddhism percolating into Indo-Aryan religious experiences through Tantricism, a degenerate kind of Buddhism as he himself has admitted. Yet, he changed his opinion in his latter-day life. In a conversation he says: "Well, I must tell you that I am not a very great believer in monastic systems. They have great merits, and also great defects. There should be perfect balance between the monastic and the householder."[36] Then he says, "But does renunciation demand that we all become ascetics? Who then is to help the others? Renunciation is not asceticism.[37] Further he says, "We must learn to

36. Works: Vol. VIII, p. 89; 227.
37. Works: Vol. VIII, p. 226.

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control all our brain-centres consciously. The first step is the joy of living. Asceticism is fiendish. To laugh is better than to pray. Sing, get rid of misery."[38]

While the writer was in the U.S.A. Miss Waldo (Yatimata) one of the early disciples and friends of Swami Vivekananda, told him, that during the first visit of Swamiji to the U.S.A. he used to advocate celebacy. But during his second visit, he climed down a little bit in this matter. He then used to say, those who wish to marry may marry. This view is evinced in one of his speeches as well in America when he extolled household life.

Of course it must be said here that Swamiji's interpretation of Hindu religion and particularly of the Vedanta, was not the hide-bound commentaries of the sectaries or the Pandits. He gave a new interpretation to Vedantic conceptions, Karma and Transmigration of Soul. Hence he and his school are called neo-Vedantists. We have already heard that he talked of making Hinduism as a dynamic religion. For this reason, to suit the dialectical exigency of the period, "He interpreted the principles of the Vedanta not in the light of the seventh or eleventh century, or of the Shastris and Pandits, but in the light of the nineteenth or twentieth century, or to be more definite, in the light of the needs of his people as was the way with the prophets and Acharyas of old."[39]

The biographers say that his watch-word was, "Dynamic Religion and United India." As a basis to this unification he speaks of "The common ground that we have in our sacred traditions, our religion."[40] As an annotation to this dream of national unity, he said again, "National Union in India must be a gathering up of its scattered spiritual forces. A nation in India must be a union of those whose hearts beat to the same spiritual tune."[41]

This conception of nationality, strange it may sound today,

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38. Works, Vol. VIII, p. 227.
39. "The Life," Vol. IV, p. 196.
40. Quoted in "The Life": Op. cit., p. 197.
41. Ibid: Op. cit., p. 197.

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had been the idea of the Hindu patriots of the latter part of the nineteenth century. We must not forget that the "National Paper" of the Hindu Mahamela of Nabagopal Ghosh once answered to the query: "Why the word 'Hindu' is tagged before the Mahamela which is really a 'national fair'." Thereupon, the editor replied, that "The Hindus are a nation" and they want to unite the Hindus. Thus at so early a period, the "Two-nation" theory was first started by the Hindu patriots. Swamiji's idea of uniting the Indians under Vedanta, and giving of a religious background to the Indian nationality was a misdirected one. What he really meant was to give a cultural background to the formation of Indian nationality. It is the idea first given by the German patriots and later taken up by the Marxists[42] in contradistinction to Swiss Bluntschli's political definition. As Germany was divided into different states, and as the Germans are scattered over various states outside the boundaries of the Fatherland, the cultural ideology of *"Deutschtum"* (Germandom)) and a cultural definition of nationality were developed.

But in India, the case has been different. The Moslems persist in not to have any truck with the Hindus. Later on, the Sikhs and the tiniest sect of the Brahmos, began to refuse to call themselves "Hindus." Hence, an all-Indian nationality on the basis of hinduistic Vedanta and its culture has never been a possibility. Similarly, the modern sense of nationality is not possible to have religion as its foundation. Only in the pristine totemistic society, a group of agnates could be gathered to form an agnatic clan around the totem, and to bind themselves with rites, ceremonies and taboos in connection with the same totem. But modern conditions make the plan of Swamiji improbable. India to-day politically is a nation, cultural basis of it rests on the development of a common culture evolving out of the historical-materialistic condition of the time.

We now come to Swamiji's exposition of the historical aspects of some rites in connection with Hinduism at the Congress of

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42. Vide H. Cunow: "Marxsche Gesellschaft Lehre."

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the History of Religions held at Paris in 1900. In this session of the Congress[43] Swami Vivekananda controverted the theories of Mr. G. Oppert regarding the origin of *Salagrama-Sila* and *Siva-Lingam*. Oppert advanced Phallic origin of these symbols. Swamiji said, "the worship of the *Siva-Lingam* originated from the famous hymn in the *Atharva-Veda Sanhita* sung in praise of the *Yupa--Stambha*, the sacrificial post. ...In the Linga-Purana, the same hymn is expanded in the shape of stories, meant to establish the glory of the great *Stambha* and the superiority of Mahadeva. Again, there is another fact to be considered. The Bauddhas used to erect memorial topes consecrated to the memory of Buddha. .....So, it might be quite probable that during the period of Buddhist ascendency, the rich Hindus, in imitation of the Bauddhas used to erect something as a memorial resembling their *Skambha*, and the poor in a similar manner copied them on a reduced scale."

As regards the origin of "Siva-Lingam" we leave it to the historians to decide. But we beg to draw the attention of the reader that the Rig-Veda speaks of the *Shishnadevas* who were prohibited to enter the precints of the sacrifice. So long nobody was clear regarding the meaning of this strange word. Sayana translated it as "a passionate person." But it was the German savant Zimmer who made the correct interpretation of the word: "Those whose God is Shishna i.e. genital". Thus it in clear that Phallic worship was prevalent in the Vedic Age, though it was not a part of the Vedic religion of the Bharata group. Again, the discoveries of the Indus Valley civilization testify to its prevalence in remote ancient times.[44]

Schliemann, the reputed discoverer of Troy, found that like that at Ilium, *Priapus* worship existed in ancient India and he noted the similarity. Hence, Phallic or sex-worship cannot be denied in ancient India. Moreover, it existed from

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43. Works: Vol. IV, pp. 355-362.
44. Vide Marshall: "Indus Valley Civilization", Vol. III. Note the evolution in pictorial exhibits.

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remote past in Asia Minor. The ancient Hebrews worshipped both the sexes as a cone and a rod made of wood. Later on, these were made of stone.[45] Nowadays, the archaeologists say that the western part of Asia beginning with the West China including India once belonged to one cultural complex from Neolithic to Chalcholithic Ages.

When such is the finding of science, then there should be no wonder that good many cultural relics of antiquity would be common. Hence *Priapus* worship in ancient Indus Valley is no isolated phenomenon. For this reason, it cannot be said, that Sivalingam worship originated with the Atharva-Veda hymn. The source of its origin in India is still uncertain. That Siva is unvedic is proved by the fact mentioned in one of the Puranas that the gods refused to eat with him, as he interdined with anybody. Again, he was not invited at Daksha's sacrifice. He was a white-skinned god.

As regards the origin of Salagram-Sila Swamiji says: "one of the names of the Bauddha *Stupas* (memorial topes) is *Dhatu-garbha,* that is, 'metal-wombed.' Within the Dhatu-garbha in small cases made of stone, shaped like the present *Salagram,* used to be preserved the ashes, bones, and other remains of the distinguished Bauddha Bhikshus, along with gold, silver, and other metals. The Salagram-Silas are natural stones resembling in form these artificially-cut stone-cases of the Bauddha Dhatu-garbha, and thus being first worshipped by the Bauddhas, gradually got into Vaishnavism, like many other forms of Buddhistic worship that found their way into Hinduism." The origin of Salagram-Sila, as given by Swamiji, is interesting and plausible. Elsewhere, Swamiji has said that it was Dayananda who found out the possible date of the introduction of the worship of Salagram-Sila by the Hindus. The latter said, that in the Vedas, the man and the wife are allowed to perform the sacrifice together, but in the Puranas it is prohibited. A woman is not allowed to worship or touch an idol of a god,

45. Frazer: "Adonis."

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hence the custom must date from the Pauranic i.e., post-Buddhist age.

Another notable thing that Swami Vivekananda spoke at the Congress was, that "the worship of Srikrishna is much older than that of Buddha," and he asks the question: "When the Gita notices the doctrines of all the religious sects of the time, why does it not ever mention the name of Buddhism?" The historicity of Sri Krishna rests on the news about one Sri Krishna the son of Devaki in the *Chhandogyapanishad*. If that be true, then his birth antidates the birth of the Buddha. But the Buddhists nowhere have mentioned the name of Srikrishna in their early literature. Only the *Cullaniddesa*, a Buddhist text regarded by the historians to be of 200 A.D., speaks of Vasudeva Cult. But Panini in post-Buddha age (Circa 400 B.C.) speaks of "Vasudeva who is the object of worship of Arjuna" in one of his aphorisms. Thus, it is hard to say when Vasudeva is identified with Devakiputra Sri Krishna and when the cult began to flourish.

As regards Swamiji's sole aim of life, it is put in a nut-shell by himself in an epistle to a friend in India from the U.S.A. in 1895. He writes: "The abstract Advaita must become living-poetic in everyday life; out of hopelessly intricate mythology must come concrete moral forms, and out of bewildering Yogi-ism must come the most scientific and practical psychology—and all this must be put in a form so that a child can grasp it. That is my life's work. The Lord only knows how far I shall succeed."[46]

In other words, Swami Vivekananda wanted to revitalize Hinduism and to put it into newer modern setting. This being against the vested interests of the priesthood, has brought their wrath and malediction on his head. Again, the bourgeoisie not being enough liberal in those days, did not appreciate him. Swamiji was appreciated much later, first, by the revolutionists and then by the liberal bourgeoisie of present-day time.

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46. Works: Vol. V, p. 60.

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## XI

# SWAMI VIVEKANANDA : A LITTERATEUR

Swami Vivekananda so long has been known as a religious preacher and his religious utterances have been descanted upon; but his multifarious activities are not yet brought to the public gaze. In this discourse of ours we will deal with the literary production and the opinion on fine arts as expressed by him in his writings. Swami Vivekananda as a critical judge of literature and fine arts have not been emphasized anywhere.

Besides his speeches, collected in book forms, he has left some writings written in Bengalee and English which throw light on his versatile genius and multifarious interests in mundane life. Some of these writings are in the form of poetry both in English and in Bengalee. We will begin with the literary productions that are in the form of poetry.

While discussing about literature we must say at the outset, that literature does not exhaust itself only by tracing *Rasa* (Taste, Humor) and *Rupa* (Form) as delineated by the late great artist Abanindranath Tagore.[1] Literature embodies many other things than this outline. The Occidental critics have divided literature into the following division: Romantic, Neo-Romantic, Idealist, Neo-Idealist, Symbolist, Realist, Neo-Realist, Impressionist.[2] Again, Victor Hugo has said that literature advances successively through three layers: Lyric, Epic and Dramatic.[3] This was the traditional mode of criticism on literature. Now-a-days, Prof. Sorokin of Harvard University classifies literature and culture into (i) *Ideational,* i.e., the literature in which the

1. Vide A. Tagore: "Bageshwari Lectures" 1925. (In Bengalee).
2. Vide. K. T. Butler: "A History of the French Literature."
3. Vide Victor Hugo: "Cromwell".

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unseen world is beyond empirical knowledge and sensory perception, and in which sound and form are regarded as the symbol of the world; (ii) *Sensate or Impressionist,* i.e., the literature which depicts the phenomena arising out of empirical knowledge as sensory realities; (iii) the literature which is mixed of both the elements is called *Idealistic* or *Mixed.* When Ideational is too inaccessible an ideal, then it is toned down and mixed with sensory realities and forms the idealistic phenomenon.[4] Further, the historians divide cultural epochs of history into Heroic Age, Classical Age, Feudal Age, Bourgeois Age, Proletarian Age, etc. Hence, the latest sociologists divide literature as the carrier of the impress of the culture of different periods of history[5] into above-mentioned stages.

Indeed, the literature of a given period bears the imprint of the development of culture of the time. As archaeological finds bear testimony of the cultural history of a past nation, likewise, the history of a living people is embedded in the literature it has produced in different epochs of its development. As human society is kineto-dynamic, naturally, society is being transformed by the process of development of civilisation. Hence, the psychology of man of the society of a given group is not the same in all its phases of development. *Rupa* and *Rasa* are relative to the objective conditions of the epoch of the society. Tastes and ideas change in the course of development of a given people. When a society develops further, *par ipassu* the literature of the people must progress. Hence, we must admit that it is worthwhile to trace the progress of a people in its literature. On this account the decadence or progress of a given people is reflected in its literature of the period.

With this little excursiveness on the field of the nature of literature, let us wend our way to Swamiji's literary production. In taking up his poems in English[6] the first we

4. Vide P. Sorokin: "Social and Cultural Dynamics", Vol. I, pp. 595-96.
5. Vide B. N. Datta: "Pragati Sahitya", (in Bengalee).
6. Vide Swami Vivekananda: "Poems", (Mayavati Publication).

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meet with is, "The Song of the Sannyasin" composed in America in 1895. In it he says:

"Strike off thy fetters! Bonds that bind thee down,
Of shining gold, or darker, baser ore,
* * * * *
For fetters though of gold, are not less strong to bind;
Then, off with them, Sannyasin bold! Say.....
"Om Tat Sat, Om!"
* * * * *
Thus, day by day, till Karma's powers spent
Release the soul for ever. No more is birth,
Nor I, nor thou, nor God, nor man. The "I"
Has All become, the All is "I" and Bliss.
Know thou art That, Sannyasin bold! Say.....
"Om Tat Sat, Om!"

It is a piece of poetry composed to the tune of *advaita* theory. It is excellent by itself as it vividly depicts the monistic philosophy of Sankaracharya. It is an expression of one's own belief. The poem has got no reference to the current condition of the country, rather it is an echo of the religious thought of the Indo-Aryans of the Mediaeval Age. As such, it is an ascetic ideational one to use Sorokin's nomenclature.

The same is the case with the poetry: "The Song of the Free." It is not a song of freed India which was then in bondage. It is a song of the man freed from the bondage of *Maya* as it says:

"From dreams awake, from bonds be free!
Be not afraid. This mystery,
My shadow, cannot frighten me!
Know once for all that I am He!"

On the other hand, in the poem, "Hold on Yet a While, Brave Heart" written to the Rajah of Khetri, a new chord is struck. It says:

"Not a work will be lost, no struggle vain,
Though hopes be blighted, powers gone;
Of thy loins shall come the heirs to all,
Then hold on yet a while, brave soul,
No good is e'er undone.

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Though the good and the wise in life are few,
Yet theirs are the reins to lead,
The masses know but late the worth;
Heed none and gently guide."

Here is a note of optimism. Again it says:

"With thee are those who see afar,
With thee is the Lord of might,
All blessings pour on thee, great soul,
To thee may all come right!"

Here we find an indication of progress indicating the future. Though it is addressed to an aristocrat, yet it is applicable to all who work for a noble cause. It serves as an inspiration to all the workers of the motherland.

Again, in the poem with the caption, "To the Awakened India" addressed to the magazine *Prabuddha Bharata* or *Awakened India,* in 1898 when the office was transferred from Madras to Almora he wrote thus:

"Once more awake!
For sleep it was, not death, to bring thee life
Anew, and rest to lotus-eyes, for visions
Daring yet. The world in need awaits, O Truth!
No death for thee!

* * * * *

They bless thee all,
The seers great, whom age nor clime
Can claim their own, the fathers of the
Race, who felt the heart of Truth the same,
And bravely taught to man ill-voiced or
Well. Their servant, thou hast got
The secret,—'tis but One.

* * * * *

And tell the world—
Awake, arise, and dream no more!
This is the land of dreams, where Karma
Weaves unthreaded garlands with our thoughts,
Of flowers sweet or noxious,—and none

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Has root or stem, being born in naught, which
The softest breath of Truth drives back to
Primal nothingness. Be bold, and face
The Truth! Be one with it! Let visions cease,
Or, if you cannot, dream but truer dreams,
Which are Eternal Love and Service Free."

This poem though addressed to a magazine preaching monistic doctrine of Sankaracharya, yet it contains veins of thought that could be applicable to India that was then awakening, and the same is also applicable to free India that is conscious of her importance in world's history. The poem though an idealistic one yet it contains a progressive tone.

In the poem entitled, "To the Fourth of July" composed on the occasion of the anniversary of the American Declaration of Independence he speaks out his heart:

"Behold, the dark clouds melt away,
That gathered thick at night, and hung
So like a gloomy pall above the earth!
Before thy magic touch, the world
Awakes.....

* * * * *

To welcome thee, with all their depth.
All hail to thee, thou Lord of Light!
A welcome new to thee, to-day,
O Sun! To-day thou sheddest *Liberty*!
Bethink thee how the world did wait,
And search for thee, through time and clime.
Some gave up home and love of friends,
And went in quest of thee, self-banished,
Through dreary oceans, through primeval forests,
Each step a struggle for their life or death;
Then came the day when work bore fruit,

* * * * *

Then thou, propitious, rose to shed
The light of *Freedom* on mankind.

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Move on, O Lord, in thy resistless path!
Till thy high noon o'erspreads the world,
Till every land reflects thy light,
Till men and women, with uplifted head,
Behold their shackles broken, and
Know, in springing joy, their life renewed!"

In this poem, Sun the light-giver is personified as the shedder of the light of liberty. In European classics, "Liberty" is always depicted as a goddess. The idea of *Liberty* or *Freedom* as a goddess is unknown to Indian literature; rather *Learning* is depicted as a goddess. The idea was new to India, especially when she had been in shackles. Even in independent India, the goddess of Liberty has not yet appeared on the horizon of Indian imagination.[7]

The poem portrayed the life-condition of a fighter for freedom which could be applicable to the future Indian fighter for independence of his country. There is a touch of realism in the poem. Hence, it is sensate in tone. The poem desires the breaking of shackles of every man and woman of the world. This is in consonance with his ideal of a new proletarian civilisation which he expressed later on. The poem is of progressive tone through and through.

In the poem captioned, "The Living God" composed in 1897, Swamiji says:

"He who is in you and outside you,
Who works through all hands,
Who walks on all feet,
Whose body are all ye,
Him worship, and break all other idols!

* * * * *

Ye fools! who neglect the living God,
And His infinite reflection with which the world is full,
While ye run after imaginary shadows,
That lead alone to fights and quarrels,

---

7. In the song "Bande Mataram", the Motherland and the Pauranic goddesses are identified.

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Him worship, the only visible!
Break all other idols!"

This short poem of Swami Vivekananda clearly expresses his latest religious views about God and man. In the first stanza he enunciates the time-old doctrine of the Immanency of Parabrahman, i.e., God is everywhere. He is "One without a second." Hence, Swamiji exhorts that you should have no other god before him. Then in the second and in the last stanza he identifies the omnipresent Parabrahman the "visible knowledge, real, omnipresent" as the *Man* walking on earth. Man as the reflection of infinity of God is to be worshipped and not "imaginary shadows". Hence, he exhorts men to seek divinity in man and to "break all other idols".

As the fitting epitaph to the philosophy that God is in man, looking after his welfare is service to God, Swamiji has coined the word—*Daridra Narayana.* The mammon-worshippers worship a rich man, but he says that the poor and pennyless man is also a reflection of God. Hence, he is to be worshipped i.e., taken care of. On this account, he formulated the dictum that service to man is service to God. Hence, service to man is the future religion of the world. The first part of the poem though contains ideational philosophy, yet it presents a new idea in the individualistic thought-world of modern India. It is the religious creed of Swami Vivekananda in the latter phase of his life. The poem points out the direction to which the religion of the future should turn. We have discussed about it beforehand. The poem is progressive in character.

Of course, many of his poems written in English are recapitulations of Vedantic theories which belong to the ideologies of the Feudal Age. Hence, these are ideational ones, and are not contributory to the direction for the material prosperity of the Indian nation. For this reason, these poems have no progressive role to play for the advancement of the Indians, though they contain sublime thoughts in them. Again, many of these poems are English renderings of

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Sanskrit and Bengalee compositions made by Swamiji himself.

Now, we discuss about the Bengalee, Sanskrit and some Hindi compositions of Swamiji. The *Stotras* (Hymns) written is Sanskrit contain the old Hindu devotional ideas and phrases addressed to new and old gods. They expressed the time-old ideology engendered in the Feudal Age of India. These poems betray idealist and symbolist characters. There are no direction in them for the advancement of the Indian people. As such, these fall within the category of ideational ones. The Bengalee and Hindi religious songs and poems are mystic and ideational.

In "Kali the Mother," an English rendering of a Bengalee poem, Kali as the goddess of destruction is depicted. It says:

"For Terror is Thy name,
Death is in Thy breath,
And every shaking step
Destroys a world for e'er.
Thou 'Time', the All-Destroyer!
Come, O Mother, come!"

Kali is the goddess of destruction. According to some, she is the *Ekajatedevi* introduced by the Buddhist philosopher Nagarjuna. The *dhyana* of Ekajata is the same as of Kali. The Agambagishes have absorbed Ekajata and ten *Mahavidyas* by christening them as Brahmanical goddesses. Of course, they have concocted Pauranic legends about them. Any way, Kali is the goddess of destruction to the Buddhist and Brahmanical Tantrikas. The Brahmanists have identified her as the another form of the wife-goddess of Shiva. Similarly, Shiva as *Nataraja* in his *Tandav*-dance is showing the *Pralaya* or destruction of the universe.

Now, the question comes up, why the destruction of creation is emphasized in the Puranas as the formula of *Sristi* (Creation) —*Sthiti* (Preservation)—and *Pralaya* (Destruction). This formula is not the same as the Hegelian formula of dialectics. It seems the inversion of the materialistic conditions of the country in the mind has given rise to the idea of God as the

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destroyer. Tropical or sub-tropical climate generating tornados, floods, droughts and other catastrophies of nature coupled with annihilating wars between different potentates, leading to constant destructions of states and uprooting of ruling dynasties, have given rise to the conception of periodic *Pralaya*. Antitheses are discernible in the society but no synthesis. None of the states in ancient and mediaeval India had been stable. The *Matsya-nyaya* i.e., the eating up of the smaller ones, by the bigger states has been the law. Empires and big kingdoms only have lasted only for a few generations. Nature shows herself in all her fury to the Indian sub-continent. There had been no way out of the misery that beset a man of India of old days. Naturally, the religious creeds and philosophical dogmas that were evolved out of this nature were appropriate to the situation. There was no talk of conquest of nature, no talk of removal of misery anywhere in Indian thought-world, but there are constant talks of escaping from the clutches of destructive nature by getting out of this world. All our religious literature down to to-day speak of the instability of the mundane world and how to get out of it as soon as possible. With a poverty-stricken people, the ideal of renunciation comes as a soothing balm. Vartrihari's *Vairagya-satakam* depicts this ideal. Stark-naked religious men were highly respected. Thus, when a person cannot get on in society on account of his poverty, he triumphs over it by donning the ochre-colored garb of a monk or by becoming stark naked gets the recognition as a Paramhansa i.e., a saint of the highest order! In this way he retrieves his fortune. Thus, as painted out by Worrall, that "religion is created in the course of the struggle of society against nature, and is therefore a special product".[8]

Such a condition as embodied in the Indian society, is really an expression of a "dying culture" as designated by the late English thinker C. Caudall. He says, that, in a class-society dominated by a hallowed official class around a god-king, "There is an increasing split between the ruling class and the active, exploited class. The one becomes more and

8. Vide. R. L. Worrall: "The Outlook of Science", p. 21.

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more functionless, parasitic, and 'philosophic', and the other more and more exploited, miserable, and superstitious..... such a culture soon becomes a hollow shell..... This is the history of what Marx called the 'Asiatic' form of culture .... All such empires are based on a settled agricultural economy..... Their religion reflects this development and the way in which man's self-feeling which has lost itself is projected in an inverted world.... The law of his society, which includes his self-alienation from the goods he produces, is just that distortion of the real facts of social life which generates the inverted world of religion."[9]

Here *en passant,* it must be mentioned, using Victor Hugo's nomenclatures, that the Rig-Veda and Sama-Veda are written in 'lyrical' veins i.e. containing high-flown sentiments and in verses intended to be sung; the post-Vedic literature is 'epical' when the ballads of feuds and conquests were composed and sung. Then comes the dramatic stage when Bhasa, Kalidasa and Bhavabhuti composed the achievements of the Indo-Aryans. But at the latter stage, the drama turned into tragedy. The latter-day dramas betrayed the decadence of the Indo-Aryans.

The religious poems of Swami Vivekananda and his defence in plea of a mystic mediaeval philosophy, are the swan-songs of a dying culture *vis-a-vis* the resurgent modernized India.

The prose works of Swami Vivekananda are composed of two books: *Paribrajak* (Traveller) and *Prachya O Paschatya* (East and the West). These are collections in book forms from the articles of Swamiji contributed in the Bengalee magazine *Udbodhana.* When these articles began to be published in the above-mentioned paper, there was a *furore* among his admirers. All of them were struck by the depth of his learning. Some said that he was showing the range of his knowledge. On the other hand, the orthodox *literati* were critical of his style of composition. They were purists of the old Sanskrit school. They could not tolerate the expressions used by Swamiji in his Bengalee

9. Vide Cristopher Caudall: "Further Studies in a Dying Culture", pp. 42-44. (1949).



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writings which savored of *Guruchandalidosa,* etc., etc. Of course, in the same way, this school was critical of the style of language of the poet Rabindranath Tagore in that time. The late litterateur Pandit Sakharam Ganesh Deuskar, the sub-editor of the weekly *Hitavadi* used to declaim against those two writers before us who were his colleagues in political field of activity. This school used to ridicule that *Udbodhana* is *Udbandhana* i.e. death by hanging. That means it hangs the language! Even a tiny weekly Bengalee paper,[10] *Banga Hitaisi* patronizingly advised, that "Vivekananda during this period of noviciate in the art of writing in Bengalee, should take lesson from his gurubhai Swami Saradananda." From the conservative *literati* came sneer and patronizing tone regarding the style of writing and the knowledge of Bengalee language of Swami Vivekananda. From the high-brow educated class which posed itself as the custodian of literary propriety came not a word of appreciation. They were *ignoramuses* in respect of the contents of his writings. All they cared for was the diction following the rules of Sanskrit grammar.

But the dialectics of time worked its inexorable way. The writings of Swami Vivekananda began to be quoted in the syllabuses of the text-books of the schools and colleges. And the Calcutta style of Bengalee used by Swamiji in his writings began to be the literary style introduced by Birbal (Pramathanath Chowdhuri) ! Thus, today, the Bengalee writings of Swami Vivekananda at last has got a niche in the history of Bengalee Literature. Here, it must be said, that peculiarly every writer who in later days got the recognition as a literary giant, had to suffer slander from the hands of the elder litterateurs. Any new innovation in the language or in style hurt the vested interests of the preceding writers. A new innovation is beyond their comprehension. On this account, Bankimchandra Chattopadhyaya had to bear criticism from the hands of the elder writers. The same had been the case with the immortal poet Michael Madhusudan Datta. The introduction of "Blank Verse" in Bengalee poesy

10. In those days there was no daily paper in Bengalee language.

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was a sacrilege according to these wiseacres. Without appreciating it, criticism and caricature were the lot of the poet who later on was called "the Milton of Bengal"!

Swami Vivekananda used to resent this kind of stupid *nil admirari* attitude of his fellow-provincials. None of the public men of Bengal underwent so much hell-fire of malignity as he himself. There is no appreciation in any new phenomenon at any time in the country. In the course of conversation with somebody, Swamiji said that the people instead of appreciating Madhusudan's new innovation in *Meghnadbadh Kavya,* caricatured him in an imitated poetical piece called *"Chuchandaribadha Kavya"* (the killing of a rat) ! Without evaluating the proper worth of the innovation, people decry it as strange and outlandish.

The thing is that till the time of Swami Vivekananda, the influence of the Pandits of Fort William College were at work. At the behest of the East India Company, the Pandits of the said College, wrote grammars of Bengalee and Hindi languages basing them on Sanskrit. And sanskritization of Bengalee and the elimination of Persian and other elements began to take place at rapid strides. This created a hiatus between the language of the text-books and the spoken one. Swami Vivekananda who was a scholar of Sanskrit, has used both sanskritised and colloquial words in his Bengalee writings. Hence, he was the butt-end of ridicule of the older school posing themselves as purists. But we have seen that the newer school has won in the long run.

Another important phenomenon that is to be observed in the country, that it is unable to respond to new ideology at present. Whatever reaction young Bengal and young India made in the middle of the nineteenth century to the new light, that was kindled by the introduction of modern Occidental education, has become evanescent in the latter part of the last century. The Bourgeoisie taking its rise from the womb of British Imperialism became decadent in the third generation. Why? That is the question.

The answer is to be sought in the dialectics of Historical Materialism. The newly arisen Indian bourgeoisie has been a

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hanger-on of the Government. As a result of the establishment of the English East India Company, a class of Indians with some Occidental education was requisitioned for its services. Thus apart from the landlord class, created out of the tax-collectors of the Mughal period, by the promulgation of *Permanent Settlement*[11] which began to give feudal airs, a middle class took its rise from the Government services, legal and other liberal professions. As newly risen Middle Class, it responded to the light that brought new ideas, and dreamt dreams of a resurrected India. But with the multiplication of educated and semi-educated men which gave rise to the scarcity of employment in the limited services and competition in the liberal profession, a class of petty-bourgeoisie took its rise. This poor middle class struggling for existence had no vision before them. They did not respond to new ideas. To them, the achievement of the upper middle class has been the *summum bonum* of advancement. They betrayed their petty-bourgeois mentality by their narrow outlook. They could not think otherwise.

The fact is, that unlike modern Europe, the bourgeoisie of India was not backed by new economic innovations or industrialization of the country. It was the interest of the power that be to keep India stagnant in her economic field. Again, for political reason, India culturally was kept backward.[12] Thus, while the Occidental countries were going forward, even Japan of Asia was going abreast with them, India got her growth arrested under the aegis of British colonial-imperialistic rule. The stagnancy of Indian brain and the closing up of the mind, have got historical-dialectical-materialistic background behind them. It is not fault of race-capacity, rather the extraneous circumstances are responsible for it. It is a sad reflexion on the British rule.

This is the reason why the reformer Keshabchandra Sen was

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11. Vide B. N. Datta: "Dialectics of Land-Economics of India".
12. Vide Dr. V. Raman, F.R.S. Who has repeatedly said that the British did not teach them Science. The liberal education that one gets in American and European Universities are lacking in Indian educational institutions.

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not so much persecuted as Swami Vivekananda, the upholder of orthodoxy! The time-lag between the both was different. The mental condition of the people was in different *niveau* at the time of the rise of Swami Vivekananda.

Coming back to Swamiji's literary activities, we find that he set up a new style in the Bengalee literature. At first, as said above, he was ridiculed by the adepts of literature. He was never liked by the conservatives; his religious preaching was discounted, his literary enterprize was discounted. It was of later date that he was discovered and appreciated. Regarding these Bengalee writings Swami Vedananda[13] says: "The book *Prachya O Paschatya* has been an unparalleled presentation of Swamiji to Bengalee literature. It will not be an exaggeration to say that it is rare to find another such a book in Bengalee literature." Then he further says, "This enlightened and educative book of Swamiji was not at first at all appreciated by the Bengal literati. At the back of it was somewhat carelessness and indifference mixed with pity. The first who gave proper appreciation to it was another person with manifold talents. He was poet Rabindranath Tagore himself. Regarding it, Sri Kumudbandhu Sen says the following in the Udbodhana Golden Jubilee number:
'A little after the publication of *Bangadarshan* in new second series (edited by Rabindranath Tagore), the late Rai Bahadur Dineshchandra Sen[14] came one evening at 8 o'clock to the writer and asked for the book, *Prachya O Paschatya*. The writer asked: 'why, when I have repeatedly entreated you to read this book that how in a forceful and living language Swamiji has given a new form to Bengalee literature, then inspite of my entreaties you never cared to read it. Today how comes this sudden demand?' Sen answered, 'I am just coming from Rabibabu to you. Today, Rabibabu was praising this book unstintingly. He was surprised to hear that I did not read it'. He said 'you go at once and read this book of Vivekananda. How colloquial Bengalee can appear as a

13. Visvavani: "Swami Vivekananda in Literary Discourses" (in Bengalee), Oct. 1948.
14. The author of "The History of Bengalee Literature." (in Bengalee).

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living and forceful language that you will realize after reading it. Such ideas, such language, similarly such penetrating liberal vision, and the ideal of synthesis between the East and the West that this book contains is surprising to one. Besides this he began to praise the book hundred-fold.' Dineshbabu taking the book went away".

It is to be noticed here that *"The Hutum Pechar Naksa"* (The caricature of a wise-looking owl) that came out at the early part of the nineteenth century, was the first attempt of prose writing in Calcutta colloquial language. But the deluge of sanskritization overwhelmed further attempt. It is a book dealing with social caricatures. But Swamiji gave out serious thoughts in Calcutta colloquial dialect.[15]

In his *'Prachya O Paschatya'* Swami Vivekananda strongly pointed out the strange religious anomaly that exists between the disciples of Christ and Krishna. Again, in this book he says: "Lakshmi (goddess of wealth) and Sarasvati (goddess of learning) both are bountiful to the Occident. They are not satisfied with the objects of enjoyment, but want to see neatness in all things.....once we had this thing also, when we had wealth. There were old manners in our talk and dealing, but these are gone; on the other hand, we have no strength to acquire the Western manners.....coming Bengal is not yet able to stand on its own legs. The arts are in especial distress. The old ladies used to paint the rooms and doors with pictures. There was art in cutting of plantain leaves, in cooking, etc. These are all gone or going! Of course, we must learn something new, but that does not mean that we shall banish the old".

This book is the product of comparative knowledge of both the continents. As such it is based on empirical knowledge; hence it is of sensate character. It is progressive in its tone.

Then comes the booklet *Paribrajak* (Traveller). It is a traveller's diary from board the ship on the way to Europe

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15. In 1926 the late Ramananda Chatterji, the editor of the "Modern Review" & "Prabasi" told the present-writer that Swamiji wrote in typical Calcutta cockney.

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as well as of sojourn on the European continent. There is much in it that is informative from classical history and the condition of Europe of that time. The book has been written in Calcutta colloquial dialect which today has *become rangé.* It is sensate and is progressive in its tone.

Then comes the booklet *Vartaman Bharata* (Modern India). The contents of this booklet has been discussed previously. It records the reading of the socio-political history of the country, and the fight between the world-views of ancient and modern India. Finally, Swamiji exhorts his fellow-countrymen to regard all Indians as brothers. The language of the book is of chaste classical style. The tone is an idealist one.

In the article on "Bengalee language" (Bangla Bhasa) written to the editor of Udbodhana, Swamiji pleads for the style of writing in the language in which people speak and think. He argues that pedantry is fine, but hard, unintelligible language is an imaginary one. Learning or pedantry can be shown in other way. Of what utility will be by creating an unnatural language instead of natural one? You think and investigate in the language which you speak at home but why do you write in uncouth form? Is not the language in which you think philosophy and science in your own mind and dispute among yourselves the fit vehicle to write down philosophy and science?

Then he answers the objection that there are different *patois* in Bengalee language. He says that due to natural condition, the Calcutta dialect is spreading and it is going to be all-Bengal language in no time. One has to banish regional jealousy. In perusing the Sanskrit literature from the Brahmanas down to modern time, one finds that the living people speak in a living language. But as the more the hour of death draws nearer the more the power of thinking diminishes, the more the mantras are formed to hide the rotten ideas by verbosity of linguistic style. When the country was going to rack and ruin, the verbose rhetorical style made its appearance!

This degeneracy appeared in arts as well. Buildings and ornaments are illustrations of it. The forms are defective but

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details are worked on it. The same is the case with music. Whether the musician is singing or crying or quarrelling—what is its idea, its aim that cannot be understood even by Bharata-rishi himself. Then the influence of Muhammedan ostad fell on it resulting in singing in a nasal tone with clinched teeth.[16]

The remedy to all these is that you will gradually understand, that language, that art, that music is of no worth which is devoid of idea, devoid of life. Then you will understand that the more the strength comes in national life, the more the language, art, music, etc., will be full of life and ideas. At that period, the two current words will express that idea which two thousand choice (metaphorical) adjectives cannot do.

The prophet in Swami Vivekananda manifests himself again in this short article. While wiseacres were ignoring him, he stood out boldly for his opinion. The latest tendency in the U.S.A. and elsewhere is to write in homely language.[17] The mid-Victorian style is gone from the English language. But today though the fight in Bengalee is over, yet the colloquial Hindu or Hindustanee has been highly persianized and arabicised and named as *Urdu* the language of the Indian Moslems, while as a counter-blast the same language is being highly sanskriticised as the national language (Rastra Bhasa). Today, the literary language of the Bengalee literature is based on simple and homely style that is current amongst the people of West Bengal.

As regards art and music, he has hit the nail on the head. Indian culture so long had been a dying culture; no amount of patriotism can deny it. The rot began before the Turkish invasion. The latter-day Sanskrit literature and the art betray it.

This piece of writing is based on comparative empirical knowledge hence it is sensate. It is realistic in tone. In the

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16. This weird wailing tone is borrowed from the Persian musicians, an oft conquered people. The same tone is to be traced in Greek music of Smyrna. Another conquered people!

17. The present-writer in his Freshman class got the first lesson in English composition, that "use homely Anglo-Saxon words". In his Post-graduate class he got the same suggestion from his Professor.

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essay on "Vartaman Samasya" (present-day problem), he deals at first on Indian ethnology. He rightly says that we do not lose much in not determining whence our ancestors came from and what proportion of their blood we have inherited. Again, he asked the question that whether India will go back to Vedic days or turn the whole country into Buddhist monastery or the prohibitive injunctions regarding food, etc., be reintroduced? Will caste-system remain? Will it be based on character or on heredity? Finally, he exhorts that *Sattva* and *Rajas* should be combined, and that is the mission of Udbodhana to preach.

This article deals with modern problems of the country, yet no solution is hinted at. It is mixed in tone, hence it is not realistic but idealistic.

The essay on "Jnanarjana" (Acquisition of learning) is a disquisition on learning old and new. Swamiji says that it is proved to-day, that learning transcends family heredity and class. Finally he says, the capacity of being a superman, a rishi, an incarnation or a great hero is extant amongst all. It develops after proper research and favorable atmosphere. In this essay Swami Vivekananda affirms that genius is of no locality or lineage. Neither it is a monopoly of a closed group nor it is hereditary. In this matter he anticipates the experimental investigations of recent psychologists.[18] The essay is sensate and progressive in tone.

In the article on *"Paris-Pradarshani"* he gives a descriptive report on the "Congress of History of Religion" held in Paris in 1901. It is a report on the part taken by him in the discussion on Indian religious institutions. As a description, it is sensate and realistic.

In the topics entitled *Bhabbar Katha* (Thoughts for reflection) he denounces the stupidities and customs of the people in the forms of parables. He castigates custom (*Lokachara*) which takes the place of divine injunction with the ignorant people. The topic No. 2 describes the Muharam festival of the Shiah-

18. Vide Murphy: "History of Psychology".

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Muhammedans at Lucknow. The gist of the enigmatic story is, that the statue of Yazid, the killer of Hassan and Hussein was looked upon by the Shiahs and the Hindus from different angles of vision.

In another parable he denounces *Lokachara* i.e., custom of the people. What hinders the Hindus from marching forward is the time-honored custom. Hence, he castigates it. In another parable he caricatures the pretensions of a priest learned in Sanskrit learning. These parable are sensate and progressive. In another essay "Ramakrishna O Tahar Ukti" (Ramakrishna and his Sayings) Swamiji dwells on the article of Prof. Max Mueller on Ramakrishna and criticises the detractors. The essay is an idealist one.

Lastly comes his "Isa Anusarana" (Imitation of Christ). We have already referred to Swamiji's translation of the famous book. It is a book of religious devotion and as such, is 'ascetic ideational' to use Sorokin's nomenclature.

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## XII

## SMAMI VIVEKANANDA : AN ART-CRITIC

Now, let us investigate the opinion expressed by Swami Vivekananda on Indian art, and art in general. As he has not written any treatise on art, we will have to glean his opinions from his writings and dialogues.

Regarding his taste for fine arts, it is the tradition of the family that Swamiji used to sketch pictures from boyhood. In this matter, the writer's elder brother, Sri Mohendranath Datta informs him the following:

"Dada[1] used to draw pictures in his boyhood. He used to draw colored pictures with water-colors that used to be sold at four annas a box. He could paint well, besides, he had a good voice in singing. While father was away in Upper India, Ramdada[2] gathering the youngsters of the house, formed a family theatrical party circa 1874 A.D. I was then six years old, 'dada' was about twelve and Ramdada was about nineteen or twenty. We all were within our teens. Ramdada was the play-wright of the party. He wrote the following short dramas in Bengalee for play: (i) *'Mohonter E' Ki Kaj'* (Is this the action of the Mohunt),[3] (ii) *'Mataler Jananir Bilap'* (The lamentation of a drunkard's mother), (iii) *'Balya Bibaha'* (Child-marriage). All these dealt with the burning social topics of the day. The first play being Ramdada's oldest production in writing, and coming out of the pen of an immature hand, was printed anonymously. Our theatrical party used to play these dramas.

"Dada, painting the scenes of the play on papers, used to paste them on the screens. Besides, he used to play Dhole (tom-tom) for the drama. Ramdada used to take the part of *'Elokesi'*, the

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1. 'Dada' is the Bengalee term for elder brother.
2. Dr. Ramchandra Datta.
3. This alludes to the Elokesi rape case instituted against the Mohunt of Tarakeswar.

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heroine of the play eating puffed rice. With a turban on my head, a dhuti on the loin, and a 'Piran' (shirt) or china-coat on the body, I took the part of the door-keeper or ticket-collector during the play.

"In that time, lots of street ballads dealing with the widow-remarriage, and the Tarakeswar Mohunt Case, used to be sung at the streets. We used to imitate these songs. One of these songs: *Ginnir Tarakessur jaoa habey na, Karta koreche mana*, ('The lady cannot go to Tarakeswar, the husband has prohibited it', used to be sung by us). We also used to sing this ironical song and dance before our grand-mother. Grannie used to scold us; but, who would hear, five or six of us used to dance such a dance! Our theatrical performances used to be held in the capacious Puja-Dalan." Later on, when Swamiji grew up, he once played the part of the saint "Swami Abhedananda" in the Brahmo drama called "Nava-Brindavan" written by Chiranjiva Sarma (Trailakyanath Sanyal) of Keshubchandra Sen's Church. Ramakrishna was very much pleased in seeing Narendra's acting.

Again, Swamiji had artistic faculty aroused in him by being a student of music. We have already narrated before, that his taste for fine arts was inherited from the family. During his wanderings in India and abroad, he made the architecture and art-collection of the local place the object of his study. The late Baikunthanath Sanyal, once narrated to us the following incidence of Swamiji's life while he was staying at Poona. Swamiji, then unknown and not known in the same name by which he was known to the world since the Parliament of Chicago in 1893 A.D., was staying as a guest of a local barrister. Once, somebody had a conversation with him about the paintings of Ravi Varma, then famous as the innovator of a new technique in Indian art of painting. Swamiji pointed out the defects of the painter. The interlocuter was taken aback that how a begging friar could dare to criticise Ravi Varma, who then enjoyed India-wide celebrity. The crushing reply came from the host himself who answered that Swamiji was an adept in art!

The biographers of Swamiji say, that "Music, art and language

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were, to his mind, so many methods for the re-interpretation of physical nature, so that the spirit stood, in the revelation, superior to the form".[4] The biographers further say, "Perceiving the relationship between religion and art in his own land, the Swami used to say, 'Hindus live in religion, and Hindus live in art.....when the true history of India will be discovered, it will be proved that as India is the first teacher of man in the domain of religion, so she is also the first teacher in art".[5]

That Swami Vivekananda's discourses and view-points on art were appreciated by his Occidental artist friends and admirers in general was evinced by the farewell reception held at the hall of the "Royal Society of Painters in Water-Colours," in Piccadilly where an enormous meeting took place.[6]

It is an interesting thing to know that it was Swamiji himself who inspired Sister Nivedita to hold a discourse on 'Fine Arts of Ancient India' at New York in August 1899.[7] Again, in 1900 at the Congress of the History of Religions held in Paris, Swami Vivekananda protested against the then accepted theory of Greek influence on Indian arts. He argued that it was natural to have cultural intercourse between the both through historical association. As the Greeks had learnt good many things from India, likewise the Indian artists have received something from the Greek artists; but it is not true that the soul of Indian art was overshadowed at any time by the Greek influence.[8] This opinion was expressed long before Mr. E. B. Havell and Dr. Ananda Coomarswamy formulated their considerate opinions on the subject.

Regarding the imperialist cant that the ancient Indians borrowed their cultural goods from the Greeks, Havell says, "Indian art was inspired by Indian nature, Indian philosophy and religious teaching, and no one, I imagine, would go so far as to say that all these were imported from the West. The little Greek, or

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4-5. Vide "The Life of Swami Vivekananda", Vol. IV, pp. 140, 143.
6. The Life of Swami Vivekananda, Vol. III, pp. 60-61.
7. Vide Prof. Kalidas Nag in "Udbodhan" Golden Jubilee Number.
8. Works: Vol. V, pp. 355-362.

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Greco-Roman art that came into India went there in the ordinary way of commercial and political intercourse, not as part of any intellectual or religious propaganda. It was assimilated by the Indian art in much the same way as a great deal of Oriental art became incorporated in Italian art".[9]

Now we turn to Coomarswamy who had an ethnic eye on the subject. As regards the much debated Greek influence in Gandhara art, the aforenamed art-critic says: "All we can say definitely is that practically every element essential to the iconography of Buddha and Bodhisattva figures appears in early Indian art before the Buddha figure of Gandhara or Mathura is known".[10] Again he says, "I am prepared to assert that the Hellenistic element actually.....traceable in Gupta art is really insignificant.....if art of the Gandhara school is half-Indian, art of the Kushana and Gupta periods in the Ganges valley is altogether Indian".[11]

Regarding the Gandhara art, Coomarswamy further says: "It may be described from one point of view as representing an eastward extension of Hellenistic civilization, mixed with Indian element, from another as a westward extension of Indian culture in a Western garb".[12]

Again, a very recent European art-critic has pronounced the following judgment: "In Gandhara the Indian idea was given a Hellenistic appearance, but there are also several examples in which not only the idea, but design and working out as well as a certain religious scene were simply copied from ancient national art".[13] Finally the critic says: "We can therefore take for granted that the influence from India on Gandhara has been considerably greater than was generally assumed upto now".[14]

Thus we see that the protest of Swami Vivekananda at the Congress of the History of Religions was a prophecy regarding

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9. Vide E. B. Havell: "Indian Sculpture", p. 168 (1908).

10-12. Vide A. K. Coomarswamy: "The Origin of the Buddha Image", pp. 27, 38, 53.

13-14. Vide J. E. Van Lohuizen-de Leeuev: "The Scythian Period", p. 80 (1949).

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the true situation of the history of Indian art. Again, his sharp artistic senses penetrated the veil of darkness that imperial cant had enshrouded the history of development of Indian art and architecture. He was the first Indian to foresee the truth in the matter.

Now let us hear what Swamiji says himself on art. In a dialogue with Sri Ranadaprosad Das Gupta, the founder and professor of the Jubilee Art Academy, Calcutta, he expressed the following views: "I had the opportunity of seeing the beauties of art of nearly every civilized country in the world, but I saw nothing like the development of art which took place in our country during the Buddhistic period. During the regime of the Mughal Emperors also, there was a marked development of art—and the Taj and the Jumma Musjid, etc., are standing monuments of that culture. Art has its origin in the expression of some idea in whatever man produces. Where there is no expression of idea, however much there may be a display of colours, light and shade, perfection in drawings, high technique —and so on, it cannot be styled as true art".[15]

Here, Swamiji has hit the nail on the head of the dilletantic cant, "art for art's sake". Art is for the sake of some idea. Some interest is implied in it. Elsewhere he explains it thus: "Art is representing the beautiful. There must be art in everything. The difference between architecture and building is that the former expresses an idea, while the latter is merely a structure built on economical principles. The value of matter depends solely on its capacities of expressing ideas".[16]

But he also criticises the Hindu Brahmanical art though it expresses an idea. He says thus in his class-talks: "That the Hindus absorbed in the ideal lacked in realistic observation is evident from this: Take painting and sculpture, what do you see in the Hindu painting? All sorts of grotesque and unnatural figures. What do you see in a Hindu temple? A *chaturbhanga* (bent four times) or some such things.

15. Vide "The Works": Vol. VII, p. 199.
16. Vide "The Works": Vol. V, p. 186.

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But take into consideration any Italian picture or Grecian statue ....what a study of nature you find in them"![17]

Regarding the grotesqueness of Hindu (Brahmanist) art, we find the opinion of Lama Taranatha of Tibet cited by Havell which expresses thus: "Wherever Buddhism prevailed skilful religious artists were found, while wherever the Mlechchhas (Muhammedans) ruled they disappeared. Where, again, the Tirthya doctrines (orthodox Hinduism) prevailed, unskilful artists came to the front".[18]

In reference to this saying of Taranatha, Havell opines, that "Taranatha's allusion to the inferiority of the Hindu artist points to some of the esoteric influence in later Hinduism which have contributed to the neglect and contempt into which Indian fine art, especially sculpture, has now fallen.....Intellectual Hinduism gave itself up to its mystic reveries and ceased to interest itself in original artistic production. Deprived on the one hand of the intellectual stimulus which gave it life, and, on the other, of the physical stimulus of state patronage.....it is not surprising that Indian sculpture of the present day has sunk to a stereotyped repetition of conventional forms in which the poetic qualities of a 'fine' art are seldom to be found".[19]

Taranatha existed in the early part of seventeenth century (1608 A.D.), hence, he spoke perhaps of the degenerate arts of conquered and decadent civilization of the Hindus. But the rot in Indian life has manifested itself in everyway before the invasion of the foreign Muhammedans. The Indian art was already a part of the dying culture of the Hindus.

Now, we come to Swamiji's comparison of the Indian art with that of classical Greek art. In the course of a dialogue he says thus: "The secret of Greek Art is its imitation of Nature even to the minutest details; whereas the secret of Indian art is to represent the ideal.....The Indian tendency, on the other hand, to represent the ideal, the super-sensual, has become degraded into painting grotesque images. Now, true Art can be compared

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17. Vide "The Works": Vol. VI, p. 72.
18. Vide Lama Taranatha: "History of Buddhism", p. 80.
19. Vide E. B. Havell: Op. cit., pp. 81-82.

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to a lily which springs from the ground, takes its nourishment from the ground, is in touch with the ground, and yet is quite high above it (when full flown). So Art must be in touch with Nature,—and wherever that touch is gone, Art degenerates—yet it must be above Nature".[20]

Again, in a dialogue Swamiji has expressed his view on the Indian art of painting in the following language. He says thus: "What good is it to paint a picture if the details are wrong? An historical picture comes up to a standard of excellence when, after making proper study and research, things are portrayed exactly as they were at that period. The truth must be represented, otherwise the picture is nothing.....To paint a really good picture requires as much talent as to produce a perfect drama".[21]

As regards art of other countries he said in the course of a dialogue, that the Japanese, "are great as a nation because of their art.....The very soul of the Asiatic is interwoven with art. The Asiatic never uses a thing unless there be art in it. Don't you know that art is, with us, a part of religion? How greatly is a lady admired among us, who can nicely paint the floors and walls, on auspicious occasions, with the paste of rice powder? How great an artist was Sri Ramakrishna himself"![22]

Here, the questioner interrogated, that, "The English art is also good, is it not"? The crushing reply came, "What a stupid fool you are! But what is the use of blaming you, when that seems to be the prevailing way of thinking!.....Know, that since the time the Europeans have come into contact with Asia, they are trying to infuse art into their own life.....Look at their building, how common-place, how meaningless, they are!..... take again their dress: their stiff coats and straight pants, fitting almost tightly to the body, are, in our estimation, hardly decent, is it not so?[23] And, oh, what beauty, indeed, in that! Now, go

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20. Vide "Works": Vol. V, pp. 185-186.
21. Vide "Works": Vo. VII, pp. 270-271.
22. Vide "Works": Vol. V, pp. 288-289.
23. The men's dress which is alluded to by Swamiji is called the "Citizen's dress" since the French Revolution. It is a simple and unartistic costume used at first by the Revolutionaries, who hence were dubbed



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all over our motherland and see if you cannot read aright, from their very appearance, the meaning for which our buildings stand, and how much art there is in them!.....Have you seen the farmers' homes in our villages?.....Have you seen their granaries for keeping paddy? What an art is there in them! What a variety of paintings even on their mud walls! And then, if you go and see how the lower classes live in the West, you would at once mark the difference. Their ideal is utility, ours art".[24]

This is the main gist of the art criticism of Swami Vivekananda. As a connoisseur of fine arts he has compared the Indian with the European art. Again, he has pronounced his verdict that Indian art has become decadent. Now, we conclude our disquisition on Swami Vivekananda as an art-critic by mentioning that it was he, who inspired the late Sister Nivedita for her understanding of Indian art. And Nivedita in her turn gave a new direction in the studies of the history of Indian art. The following letter of Silpacharya Dr. Nandalal Bose, the celebrated artist, in answer to the queries of Sri Barendranath Neogi, an artist and a Prof. of the "Government College of Art and Craft", Calcutta, put to him on behalf of the present-writer speaks for itself:

In answer to the first query, "Whether Swami Vivekananda inspired the Sister Nivedita in her art conception", Silpacharya Sri Nandalal answers: "Whatever discussion the Sister Nivedita used to hold on art, her ideal was undoubtedly received from Swamiji. Again, the ideal of aesthetics of Ramakrishnadeva

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a *Sansculottes* (without knee-breeches). Before that time, since the Mediaeval Age, the Western Europeans took up West-Asiatic dress after the Crusades.... [See Von Sybel's "History of the Crusades". The European dress and articles of luxury came from the East. The ancient Celts, Teutons and the Slavs used to cover their bodies with leather straps. They neither could evolve a religion of their own nor could they evolve a dress of their own. The Europeans in general have not been able to evolve a religion of their own. Only the Perso-Aryans and the Indo-Aryans have been able to evolve it. This is the verdict of the Orientalists. As regards the rate of change of costumes of India in contrast with that of Europe, see Ghurye: "Indian Costume".

24. Vide Works: Vol. V, p. 289.

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was manifested through Swamiji. Swamiji had a personal bold ideal of manliness which the Sister Nivedita received from him. Hearing the discourses from the mouth of the Sister, I used to imagine that I was hearing the spirited and fearless words of Swamiji. This indebtedness of Nivedita to Swamiji is mentioned in many places of Nivedita's book, 'The Master as I Saw Him'. Something is also mentioned in Romain Rolland's book, 'Swami Vivekananda and Ramakrishna'. Again, it is also mentioned in the book entitled, "Travels on the Himalayas with Swami Vivekananda".

In answer to the second query, "Whether he got any inspiration from Nivedita herself", Sri Nandalal answers: "During 1906 A.D. the Sister individually spoke to me from time to time. Once, accompanied by the late Brahmachari Ganendranath, she came to the Government School of Art to meet Abanindranath Tagore. At that time she inspected some of my paintings and gave me the following advice: One of them was Sri Krishna breaking down the wrath of Satyabhama by touching her feet. Seeing this picture, she excitedly said, 'Don't paint such a picture again. It is an object of shame that a man should remove the ill-humour of a woman in such a way'. The second picture was that of Mother Kali. The Sister was pleased in seeing it, but said, 'the image is not in proper order. Why have you put so much garments on her? Kali is sky-claded, she is fearless and maker of *Pralaya* i.e., destroyer'. Then she asked me to read the poem on Kali by Swamiji.

"The third picture was the death of Dasaratha in affliction after the departure of Rama in forest. And Kausalya was sitting at his feet holding a common palm-leaf-fan in her hand. The picture pleased her and she borrowed it from me. But laughingly she said: 'Kausalya is the queen of a king; a valuable ivory-fan only fits in her hand. A fan made of palm-leaf does not fit her. Go to the museum and see such a handiwork. But the picture has got a lonely, and peaceful atmosphere. It reminds me of the room of Sri Sri Holy Mother,[25] hence it pleases me much'. At the time of departure she told

25. The Wife of Ramakrishna Paramhansa.

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Ganen Moharaj to bring me to her place at Bosepara Lane.

"An incidence of another day is mentioned here: I and my fellow-student Surendra Ganguly went to visit the Sister at her Bosepara Lane address. We went upstair to her outer sitting room. She was absent at that time from the house. By the side of a table, there was a sofa. We sat on it hanging our feet down. She came back home and saw us sitting in that posture. Seeing it, the Sister ordered us to sit cross-legged on the floor! Showing a little Buddha statue lying on the table, she asked us to sit in that way. We felt hurt at it, we thought that *Memsaheb* has ordered us to sit down on the floor as we were 'natives'! After our sitting cross-legged on the floor, she sitting on that sofa stared at us attentively and said: 'You are all Buddhas'. Then our disaffection vanished from our hearts and then we could understand her idea in ordering us to sit in that way. Pointing to a bronze statue, she asked, 'whose statue is this'? We all answered, 'it is a Buddha statue'. She said, 'No, it is the statue of Swamiji'. Then she asked me to paint a picture of Swamiji sitting in such a posture (*Asana*). I painted such a picture for her.

"Thereafter, I used to visit her very often. One day I showed her my new venture named 'Jagai and Madhai'.[26] Apreciating it very much she asked, 'wherefrom did you get their facial appearance?' I answered 'I drew the faces by meditating on face of Girishbabu'.[27] Hearing it she laughed and said, 'How could you draw so much in detail!' Pausing for some time she said, 'draw picture always after meditation (*Dhayana*). This is the principle of our Indian drawing'. Then she laughed at seeing a common *hooka* (smoking instrument) attached to the girdle of Jagai, and said, 'at the time of Jagai smoking of tobacco was not introduced. Any way, it is well drawn. At the time of painting a picture, one should read from the books about the manner and custom of the time'.

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26. Two dissolute and oppressive police-officers of Navadwip who were reclaimed by Nityananda at the order of Sri Chaitanya. Thereafter they became great Vaisnava devotees.
27. The great dramatist, actor and a disciple of Ramakrishna Paramhansa.

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"Another time the Sister sent me and Sri Asit Halder to Ajanta to accompany Lady Harringham to copy the Fresco paintings. At that time, without consulting us, she fixing the day of departure, handed us over two railway tickets and fund for our journey. She used to give direction in that way! It was impossible to disobey her. After reaching Ajanta, we found that the Sister, Prof. J. C. Bose and Srimati Abala Bose, and Ganen Brahmachari arrived there. We with surprise beheld that the Sister at the time of alighting from the 'tonga' was uttering 'Durga', 'Durga'. She had a white *alkhalla*[28] of white silk on her body, the hair was bound top-knot on the head, a garland of *rudraksha*-beads on her neck and a crystal rosary in her hand. Her face was radiant with joy (Aban babu[29] once told us that he visualised the meditating *Uma* in her). After making arrangement for our stay there, she went away. The thought about the progress of the Indian artists always dwelt in her mind."

Again, in answer to the question: "Whether the Sister Nivedita gave instruction on art to Havell" Sri Nandalal answers thus: "Yes, the Sister gave instruction to Mr. E. Havell on art. It seems to me that she made Havell understand the view-points of the Indian Aesthetics and Philosophy of Art. Because in that time Mr. Havell was very eager to understand the internal mystery and esoteric meaning of the Indian art. This attitude of mind of Havell is manifest in his books, viz., 'Indian Painting and Sculpture', 'Indian Architecture', etc. I do not know whether Havell has mentioned the name of the Sister anywhere in his books; but he always used to discuss with the Indian savants during his writing on Indian art. During this time he used to delve into the Tantras as well. Justice Woodroffe and Havell used to hear the *Puranas* by engaging Pandits. In order to understand the esoteric meaning of the Tantra he used to perform 'mantra sadhana' from his Tantrik Guru Atal Ghose.[30] Further, to understand the Tibetan Tantric picture

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28. Ancient over-all used by some religious orders.
29. The artist Abanindranath Tagore.
30. A pleader of Calcutta.

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and their *bija-mantras,* he used to take the help of the Tibetan Lamas. In this way, during the course of his Tantric religious exercises (*sadhana*) Havell got mental derangement. He was attacked with lunacy. It was impossible to take him near the gallery of the Government School of Art where the picture of the Indian gods and goddesses are stored. Seeing these pictures, immediately would he sit down by making *asanas* (postures of meditation). Three to four Sikh guards were kept around him. I was a student of Art School in that time. Later on, he was sent back to England, where he recovered. He used to venerate Swami Bhaskarananda of Banaras like a Guru, kept his photo always before him.

"As regards the question about my opinion on the Swami Vivekananda's style of writing Bengalee, it is beyond my capacity. It is my impression that as the Buddha, Jesus, Muhammad, etc. by lecturing in colloquial languages of their days gave them a place in contemporary literature, and made the literature intelligible to the people, likewise, Swamiji led the Bengalee language in that direction. Swamiji has made the Bengalee language energetic and full of life. He has sharply criticised the intricacy and mannerism of art. Following his message, the art of the future will be again simpler, as well as full of life and forceful.

"To the artists the ideal of Swamiji acts like the backbone of the art, without which art becomes weak and lifeless. Swamiji's method of understanding aesthetic fully, was through *Jnana* (Knowledge), while the Thakur (Ramakrishnadeva) arrived at the realization of knowledge through aesthetic. Both of them fully realized the aesthetic and knowledge, only the path of process was different. Methinks, the path of *Anubhava* (apperception) of the Thakur is more suitable to the artists. The artists always follow this way. The worshipper of *Rupa* (form) is an idolaterer, the worshipper of knowledge is a believer of incorporeal being (the artists deal with *Maya*). But there is a chance of downfall of an artist if he does not realize knowledge by working through the process of *anubhuti.* On the other hand, to an adept of knowledge, many times it becomes hard for the attainment of apperception and form.

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But to a prophet everything is different. Everything is mysterious about them.

"Havell, Abanindranath, Okakura (a Japanese artist and art-critic), Sri Jagadish Bose, etc. all used to discuss about art with the Sister Nivedita. All of them were inspired by the *ideal* of the Sister. One can understand by reading their books. The Sister had discussion with Rabindranath as well. Once Rabindranath, Jagadis Bose and the Sister went on a trip on the Padma river by a boat. But I do not know what was the subject matter of their discussion. On the other hand, I have heard that the Hero of the novel 'Gora' was the conception of Rabindranath through the percept—the Sister".[31]

Santi-Niketan
25-8-1954. (Sd.) Nandalal Bose".

Thus it is clear from the letter of the celebrated Silpacharya Dr. Nandalal Bose, a disciple of late Abanindranath Tagore, that the Sister Nivedita was inspired by her Guru, Swami Vivekananda to understand the spiritual import of Indian fine arts. Again, the Sister inspired E. B. Havell, the Principal of the Government School of Art, to understand the esoteric meaning of Indian art. As a result, it was Havell, the first English art-critic who defended the true import of Indian art from the vulgar attacks of the British imperialist critics. It was Havell who first brought to light the true meaning of Indian art to the world. It was Havell who emphatically denied that the architecture of Taj Mahal was indebted to the European artists for its conception. It was Havell who took up the cudgel to defend the Indian art and its influence outside India. Consequently, he had to suffer the displeasure of the then ruling class —his compatriots. The Sister told the present-writer in New York in 1911, that "Poor Havell! he had to suffer persecution from the hands of the prejudiced Anglo-Indian officialdom."

Strangely, he who devoted his life and suffered persecution from his fellow-countrymen in India, who first threw the light

31. Sri Prabhat Kumar Mukherji: "Rabindra-Jibani". Vol. II, p. 216, 1949 (Bengalee).

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on the despised branch of Indian culture—art and architecture, has been forgotten so soon. But his disciples carried the torch of light further. The late great Indian artist Abanindranath Tagore repeatedly expressed that Havell was his Guru in art.[32]

Here our discussion remains incomplete unless we mention the name of another Britisher, who interpreted another side of Indian cultural history to the Occidentals. That was Justice Woodroffe of the Calcutta High Court, who under the pseudonym "Arthur Avalon", translated the Brahmanical Tantras in English, and made the tenets of the Tantra religion intelligible to the non-Indians. His attempt was to remove the prejudices of the non-Tantricas and the foreigners against this side of Indian cultural history. As some of the Tantric conceptions have influenced Brahmanical and Buddhist art, it is beholden on us to acknowledge with thanks the services of Sir John Woodroffe in this matter.

We have already heard from Sri Nandalal Bose, that Messrs Havell and Woodroffe used to study the Tantra theology and the Puranas with the Pandits. Surely, Woodroffe must have been acquainted with the Vivekananda-Nivedita interpretation of Indian art and religious philosophy either from the Sister herself or individually through Mr. Havell. His orientation to Tantric cult must have emanated from the same source.

Further, at the request of Sri Nandalal Bose, Prof. Haridas Mitra of the Santi-Niketan University has sent us the following interesting bit of information *a propos* Justice Woodroffe's Tantrik *sadhana*:

"Sir John Woodroffe and Lady Woodroffe were the disciples of Sri Sri Jagadambamba, a Deccanese *Bhairavi*. By taking initiation (*Diksha*) from her, Woodroffe and others used to practise Tantric sadhana. Besides these persons, Sri Atalananda Saraswati and Srimati Gouramba Garu were their fellow-disciples. Miss J. Macleod, an American disciple of Swami Vivekananda,

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32. Vide Abanindranath Tagore and Srimati Rani Chanda: "Jorasankor Dhare" (in Bengali), pp. 84, 130; also See Havell: 'The Ancient and Mediaeval Architecture of India' dedicated to A. N. Tagore with his Guru's greetings.

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once took Srijukta Garu to Sri Ramakrishna Math, Belur in a motor-car. I have seen it, as I have been present in the Math at that time."

Thus, in this wise, we find that the direction of Swami Vivekananda was in every cultural revival of resurgent India. He not only gave a new orientation to the old dogmas of Vedantism, he also gave a new impetus to nationalism. Besides these, in art also we find that his interpretation won the day. His disciple Nivedita left her marks on Havell and others. Abanindranath, at first imbued with foreign influence, turned later to the national style of the Indian art. He was influenced by the Sister Nivedita. Also, he repeatedly acknowledged Mr. E. B. Havell as his *Guru*. The disciples of Abanindranath have been Silpacharya Dr. Nandalal Bose and others who acknowledge to be influenced by the Sister.

Thus the new school of Indian art bears the impress of Swami Vivekananda and her disciple Nivedita through the concatenation of discipleship. Hence, it is the *Vivekananda-Nivedita Age* that is going on in the national school of Indian art.

Nay, the more we are investigating, the more we find that his inspiring direction was in all the manifold cultural and national activities of reviving India. We have already named him as the *Beginner* of New National India that is unfolding itself.

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## XIII

## SWAMI VIVEKANANDA : NATIONAL IDEOLOGY

Swami Vivekananda came back to India in 1896-7 A.D. Since that time he travelled over greater part of India and delivered speeches and contributed articles in *Udbodhana* paper. From these speeches and articles we cull out here what pertains to the national question and what concerns India in general.

As regards the authoritative source of Indo-Aryan religion, there had been a dispute regarding it during the interregnum period of India's slavery. The priesthood have contended that *Smriti* is the authority. The Tantricas have contended that Sruti, Smriti and the Purana have been nullified in Kaliyuga and *Tantra* is the authority. Again, in practice it is seen that the neo-Smritis known as *Nibandhas* written during this period are in vogue, and are regarded as authoritative in the law courts.

Hence, the historic declamation of Swami Vivekananda in his reply to the Madras address, that "however great may be the merits of the Sanhita and the Brahmana portions of the Vedas to the ethnologists or the philologists,.....it was all in the way of Bhoga; and no one ever contended that it could produce Moksha. As such, the Jnana Kandam, the Aranyakas, the *Srutis* per excellence which teach the way to spirituality, the Moksha Marga, have always ruled, and will always rule in India."[1] It is true that Sruti is the final authority as admitted by Jaimini in his "Purvamimansa". That has been forgotten by the people who are lost in the mazes of priestly innovations.

In his lecture in Madras on "My Plan of Campaign" he said: "So every improvement in India requires first of all an upheaval in religion. Before flooding India with socialistic or

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1. Works: Vol. IV, pp. 278-279.

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political ideas, first deluge the land with spiritual ideas."[2] That religious upheaval precedes a political upheaval is the lesson of history. The dialectical fight first generates in the brain i.e., in the thought world, then it incarnates itself in the material world. Truly, after nearly a century of dialectical oppositions in the field of religion, the fight descended in the Indian political field in the first decade of the twentieth century.

Then he says, "For centuries people have been taught theories of degradation. .....The masses have been told all over the world that they are not human beings. .....Let them have faith in themselves, for what makes the difference between the Englishman and you? .....I have found the difference. The difference is here, that the Englishman believes in himself, and you do not.....what we want is strength, so believe in yourselves. We have become weak, and that is why occultism and mysticism come to us, these creepy things; there may be great truths in them, but they have nearly destroyed us. Make your nerves strong. What we want is, muscles of iron and nerves of steel. We have wept long enough. No more weeping, but stand on your feet and be men. It is a man-making religion that we want. It is man-making theories that we want. It is man-making education all round that we want. ....These mysticisms, inspite of some grains of truth in them, are generally weakening. ....Give up these weakening mysticisms, and be strong. .....The truths of the Upanishads are before you. Take them up, live up to them, and salvation of India will be at hand."[3]

In this concise saying, Swami Vivekananda gives a program for regeneration for India. Of course, his was a religious program. Still, he fought against pessimism of the Indians and the foreign imported mysticism and occultism that had then inundated the country. He appealed to his countrymen to shed the fear complex by coming out of the national

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2. Ibid: Vol. III, p. 221.
3. Works: Vol. III, pp. 223-224.

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hypnotism that has enshrouded them. He asked them to be men of iron with strong brain.

Here he pointed out the historical truth, that people in their state of degradation take refuge in mysticism. A healthy nation applying the socratic advice of "sound mind in a sound body" never resorts to these creepy things that paralyse the brain. The realistic part of this program was taken up by the revolutionaries. "Yugantar", the organ of the Bengal Revolutionary Party, bore the motto on the frontispiece: "Atman cannot be gained by a weak man". In reply to the address given at Ramnad, he says: "On our work depends the coming of the India of the future. She is there already waiting..... Arise and awake and see her seated here, on her eternal throne, rejuvenated, more glorious than she ever was—the motherland of ours."[4] In this figurative speech he has delineated the ideals of "Mother (India) that will be in future" as portrayed in the "Anandamath" of Bankim-chandra. The same idea, that India, the Mother, had been the breath of Swamiji's life, has been noted by Sister Nivedita[5] as well.

In his reply to Manamadura address he says: "Our religion is in the kitchen. Our God is the cooking-pot", and "our religion is 'Don't touch me, I am holy'."[6] This important tirade against abolition of "Don't touchism" of Swami Vivekananda has fructified itself in present-day India. Mahatma Gandhi's message for abolition of untouchability which has been an echo of this message, has found a niche in the national constitution.

Again, in "A Plan of Work for India," he says: "I fully agree with the educated classes in India, that a thorough over-hauling of society is necessary. But how to do it? The destructive plans of the Reformers have failed. My plan is this.....I tell my countrymen.....that so far they have done well—now is the time to do better."[7] Thus he wanted his

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4. Ibid: Vol. III, p. 154.
5. "The Master as I Saw Him," p. 49.
6. Works: Vol. III, p. 167.
7. Ibid: Vol, pp. 316-317.

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fellow-countrymen to advance further. He did not want the society to remain static.[8]

Again, in a letter to Pramadadas Mitra of Banaras, he wrote: "The conviction is daily gaining on my mind that the idea of caste is the greatest dividing factor and the root of Maya —all caste either on the principle of birth or of merit is bondage."[9] Thus he discountenanced the idea of hereditary caste or exclusiveness of rank due to official status. Again, in an article entitled, "Solution of Modern Indian Problem," he said thus: "Once in far remote antiquity, the Indian philosophy coming in contact with Greek energy, led to the rise of the Persian, the Roman and other great nations. After the invasion of Alexander the Great, these two great waterfalls colliding with each other, deluged nearly half of the globe with the spiritual tides, such as, Christianity, etc. Again, a similar commingling, resulting in the improvement and prosperity of Arabia, laid the foundation of modern European civilization. And perhaps, in our own day, such a time for the conjunction of these two gigantic forces has presented itself again. This time their centre is India".[10]

This statement regarding historical happenings may not be accepted by many Occidental historians, but it is nowadays being said that the contact of India with Western Asia and Egypt dates from Neolithic Age. Again, enough archaeological traces are being found regarding the affinity of culture between India and Western Asia in the Chalcolithic Age. The Rig-Veda bears a faint testimony of this contact. Mr. W. I. Thomas, the American sociologist and former professor of Chicago University, told the present-writer when he was a post-graduate student there in 1914, that he believed, that "India was the thought-centre of the ancient world".

In his lecture on "My Plan of Campaign" Swamiji says, "To the reformers I will point out, that I am a greater reformer than any one of them. They want to reform only little bits.

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8. "The Master as I Saw Him," p. 156.
9. "Letters of Swami Vivekananda," p. 383.
10. Works: Vol. IV, p. 335.

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I want *root and branch reform*. Where we differ is in the method."[11] Elsewhere he says, "we do stand in need of social reform."[12] Thus we see that he wanted to reform the society root and branch, and we will find later on what kind of reform he wanted.

In his lecture in Madras on "The Work Before Us" he says: "The whole of Western world is on a volcano which may burst to-morrow, go to pieces to-morrow. They have searched every corner of the world and have found no respite. Now is the time to work so that India's spiritual ideas may penetrate deep into the West. We must go out, we must conquer the world through our spirituality and philosophy. .....The only condition of national life, of awakened and vigorous national life, is the conquest of the world by Indian thought."[13] Thus with this ideal in view the Indians must go out to the world for "the welfare of many, for the happiness of many". And like the good Samaritan can heal the woes of the modern world. This should be the attitude of New India towards foreign countries. Swamiji has pointed it out long ago.

How prophetic had been his vision so early as 1896-97! In 1914 the Western volcano burst forth and it is still erupting. Excessive materialistic development leading to economic and social maladjustment is responsible for this periodic outburst. As for the latter part of the prophecy it depends on the work of the Indians. It is the foreign policy of India as enunciated by Swami Vivekananda. Of course impartial observers must admit that the Indian thought is affecting the West since long time in modern age. Again, in his lecture on "The Future of India", he says: "The problems of India are more complicated, more momentous, than the problems in any other country. Race, religion, language, government—all these together make a nation..... Therefore, the first plank in the making of a future India....is this unification of religion.....

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11. Ibid. Vol. III, p. 213.
12. Ibid. Vol. V, p. 145.
13. Works: Vol. III, p. 277.

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I do not mean to say that political or social improvements are not necessary, but what I mean is this.....that religion is primary".[14]

But we have already discussed that the present-day sociologists opine that unity of race, religion, language, etc., singly form one of the factors for the formation of nationality but not enough for the required basis. On the other hand, the combination of all these factors are not to be found in a given territory for the building up of a nation. Moreover, the word "race" has been discarded by the modern anthropologists. They say that there are "ethnic groups" only. Rather, it is seen that a common historical-cultural evolution based on communities of interest and fate form a nation. To-day's Indian nation is being based primarily on communities of interest and fate.

India always had a common cultural evolution since the days of the Gupta Empire. Racial feeling, as understood to-day in the Occidental imperialist sense, never existed in India. Of course, there were tribal, clan, and territorial (Janapada) feelings. But the cultural *Aryatva* or Aryandom engulfed all these differences. In the Gupta Empire, cultural and political nationality were simultaneously achieved. The Vishnu Purana sang jubilantly of it. To-day, India, though truncated again, is under a common historical-cultural evolution. All the ingredients being assured, there is a chance of the growth of a homogeneous nationality in India that is Bharat. Here it should be remembered that those of India who considered themselves to be different in communities of interest and fate, have gone out of Bharat.

Again, in his reply to the address at Paramakudi, while discussing about the political institutions, Swamiji said: "On the other hand, the political system that we are struggling for in India, have been in Europe for ages, have been tried for centuries, and have been found wanting. One after another, the institutions, systems, and everything connected with political government have been condemned as useless, and

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14. Works: Vol. III, pp. 286-289.

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Europe is restless, does not know where to turn. The material tyranny is tremendous. The wealth and power of a country are in the hands of a few men who do not work, but manipulate the work of millions of human beings. By this power they can deluge the whole world with blood. All those things that you hear about constitutional government, freedom, liberty and parliaments are but jokes."[15]

When the leaders of the Indian society were running helter-skelter after the chimera of English institutions, when they could not or would not see anything of the West beside English civilization as they were growing under the *aegis* of British Imperialism, Swami Vivekananda, whose acquaintanceship extended from Prof. James, the psychologist of Harvard University, to Prof. Patrik Geddes, the Scotch sociologist, to the Italian scientist N. Tesla, to the British scientist Lord Kelvin, to Prof. Deussen, the Sanskritist of Kiel University, to Peter Kropotkin the anarchist-communist leader of Russia, to ex-clerical Loyson (Pere Hyacinthe) of France and others, had no bias for the civilization of any particular Occidental nation and had practical experiences in several of those countries. Thus when our country was in the dark regarding social and political institutions of other countries, and groping towards English institutions only, it was Swami Vivekananda who warned his fellow-countrymen of the awful condition of the Western civilization. Today, we know better.

Further he said, "The whole of Western civilization will crumble to pieces in the next fifty years if there is no spiritual foundation. It is hopeless and perfectly useless to attempt to govern mankind with the sword."[16] How prophetic had been these utterances! Europe crumbled to pieces after a decade of this utterance.

As a remedy to this condition, Swamiji hoped, that "what will save Europe is the religion of the 'Upanishads'." That is a question to be answered by the future only. The Russian-American sociologist of Harvard University, Prof.

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15-16. Works: Vol. III, pp. 158-159.

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P. Sorokin, prophesied after the first debacle of Europe and the complete transformation of Russia, that the "ideational" stage would come back to Europe as she would not remain satisfied with "Sensate." By it he means that European culture will revert to Mediaevalism again. She is tired of materialistic culture of the present.[17]

Whether the West will accept Upanishadic mysticism or revert to mediaeval Christain mysticism is a big question of the future. Of course, the both have some affinities with each other. But as the result of dialectical process, a new civilization is growing up in Eastern Europe and casting its shadow both on the West and the East—it is the *Proletarian Civilization.* This is promising to fill up the gap between despair and despondency on the one hand, and the exploiting rule of the sword of the Shylocks on the other.

Now, we come down to practical work of Swami Vivekananda for his country. He wanted a band of young self-negating workers. With this ideal in view he organized the Ramakrishna Mission. But there had been a dissentient voice from one of his *Gurubhais* (fellow-disciples). It is a fact that when Swami Vivekananda was lecturing in the U.S.A. some of his *sanyasi*[18] and house-holder[19] *gurubhais* inveighed him for deviating from the teachings of Ramakrishna Paramhansa. In the matter of the foundation of the Mission, his biographers say: "One of the Swami's *gurubhais* was taking him to task for not preaching Sri Ramakrishna and challenging him to prove how his ideas could be reconciled with their Master's teachings. For Sri Ramakrishna was, above all, for *Bhakti* and for practising *Sadhanas* for realizing God, while Swamiji always incited them to go about working, preaching and serving the poor and the diseased. Then again, Swamiji's ideas.....of organization and of patriotism, undoubtedly Western in conception, his efforts of

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17. Vide "Cultural and Social Dynamics."

18-19. Vide Dr. Ramchandra Datta's lecture, in 1894 (?) at the Star Theatre; also, "Anecdotes on the Life of Swami Vivekananda, p. 97, and "Anecdotes on the Life of Swami Saradananda", p. 193 (both in Bengalee) by Mahendranath Datta.



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creating a new type of Sanyasins with a broader ideal of Renunciation,—all these and others of a similar nature were incompatible with Ramakrishna's ideal of *Tyaga,* and would have been surely discountenanced by their Master. Swamiji took these observations of his 'gurubhais' at first in a lighter mood and began to retort in a jocular way..... You are a fit *chela* of Sri Ramakrishna! Like *Guru* like *chela!* Growing more and more serious he thundered on like a surging sea:

"You think you have understood Sri Ramakrishna better than myself!..... Your *Bhakti* is sentimental nonsense which makes one impotent. Hands off! Who cares for your Ramakrishna? Who cares for your *Bhakti* and *Mukti?* Who cares what the scriptures say? I will go into a thousand hells cheerfully, if I can rouse my countrymen, immersed in *Tamas,* to stand on their own feet, be *men* inspired with the spirit of *Karma Yoga.* I am not a follower of Ramakrishna or any one, I am a follower of him only who carries out my plans! I am not a servant of Ramakrishna or any one, but of him only who serves and helps others, without caring for his own *Bhakti* or *Mukti.*"[20]

This news agrees with the bit of information given to the present-writer by Sister Christine. He expressed in one of his epistles as early as in 1895: "What I now want is a band of fiery missionaries."[21] The formation of a band of monks from the middle class of the society to serve the poor, has a historical import. During the Middle Ages, Europe saw the cloistered monks as well as the begging friars. Then, as the aftermath of the Crusade movements, the rise of the Knight-Templers, the fighting monks, took place. These are matters of known history.

Similarly, in India there had been the cloistered monks from antiquity (Rishyasringa was a *Vatarasana muni* of Rig-Veda: X. 136. 2.). Perhaps the Buddhists with state-help converted their *Sanghas* into big *monasteries.* But the

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20. "The Life", Vol. III, pp. 158-159; also Works: Vol. VI, pp. 432-433.
21. Works: Vol. V, pp. 52-53.

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Turkish-Moslem invasion put an end to these institutions. Instead, the foreigners inform us of swarms of begging monks spreading all over the country. But the dialectics of Historical-Materialism generated the *Naga*-monks in the reign of Akbar, as the fighting-monks of India. It was left to the genius of a learned monk of Bengal named Madhusudan Saraswati, to organize the fighting Naga-monks to counteract the fanatical oppression of the Moslem *ghazis*. Having got the negative permission of the Emperor Akbar, that the Hindus like the Moslems can defend themselves, he organized the Naga-sadhu order of fighting monks.[22] Still later, in the time of Aurangzeb, the dialectics of history impelled Guru Govinda Singh to organize his Khalsa—a fighting order of his religious movement, as boasted by him that each one of his "Khalsa" will match a hundred Mughal fighters.

Again, the historical necessity of modern time led Swami Vivekananda to make a new departure from the orthodox path. He organized Sadhus recruited from the middle class for social service scheme that he put forth. Of course, it was a departure from orthodoxy and a new phenomenon in the country. Formerly, the Christian missionaries did this work. Then the Brahmo Samaj took it up. Lastly came Swami Vivekananda to mobilize young monks for social service. This new phase of Sadhu movement is in contradistinction with the quietism and pietism of time-hallowed custom of recluse life. The Sadhu of the Ramakrishna order lives out of the society as well as in it. Certainly, the innovation had its detractors; but in the course of time some other orders are copying it. The people have appreciated the merit of the innovation.

It is not to be denied that social service work inaugurated by him is the influence of modern West on him. On the other hand, service of dumb creature was an institution established

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22. Farquhar: "Fighting Sects of India" in John Rylands' Library Bulletin, Vol. 9, No. 2 July, 1925; also, "The Organization of the Vedanta" in R. A. S. of Great Britain and Ireland, July, 1925.

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by the Buddhists and the Jainas. Asoka opened hospitals for dumb creatures. The Jainas still practise it. But individualistic Brahmanism never countenanced such institutions, though their prayers in *mantra*-forms extend to the deaf and dumb animals as well. Hence Swami Vivekananda's innovation is a new departure in orthodox Hinduism. Another interesting scheme of his was to establish a Vedic College in the monastery at Belur as "it will kill out superstition."[23]

Thus taking a stock of his ideologies concerning India we notice the following features:

*Firstly*: He was intensely patriotic. He says: "Thou brave one, take courage, be proud that you art an Indian, and proudly proclaim, 'I am Indian,—every Indian is my brother'." Further he exhorts, "Say brother,—'The soil of India is my highest Heaven, India's good is my good'."[24] Thus he was out and out 100% Indian in the dark days of Indian patriotism. In order to understand his religious and social philosophies, we must bear this fact in mind.

*Secondly*: We see that he wanted to *reform* Hinduism, he wanted an organic change in it. He wanted to make it aggressive like Islam and Christianity.[25]

*Thirdly*: As a result of his vast experience all over India, he came to the conclusion, that the means of India's regaining self-consciousness was the *spiritual* means.[26]

*Fourthly*: "He saw that the meeting-place where all sects, castes and peoples of Hindusthan could unite, would be in the spirit of an organized *brotherhood,* of an organized public life and in that of an organized feeling of responsibility on the part of all educated Indians to the masses".[27]

*Fifthly*: "He felt that different religious ideals should be a matter of *personal* realization, never being permitted to affect

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23. "The Life": Vol. IV, p. 77; Vol. V. p. 63.
24. Ibid: Vol. IV, p. 185.
25. "The Master as I Saw Him", p. 155.
26. "The Life," Vol. II, p. 225.
27. Ibid: Op. cit., p. 227.

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the affairs of State..... He felt that with the recognition of the deeper elements of truth all sectarian bitterness would die out and all would join hands in the common task of restating and remodelling, according to modern needs, the contents of the ancient Indian culture".[28]

*Sixthly*: Another of his ideology was expressed in the following words of his: "Spirituality has nothing to do with the display of psychical powers which, when analysed, show that the man who performs them is the slave of desire and the most egoistical of egoists. Spirituality involves the acquisition of that true power, which is character. It is the vanquishing of passion and the rooting out of desire. All this chasing after psychical illusions, which means nothing in the solution of the great problems of our life, is a terrible wasting of energy, the most intense form of selfishness, and leads to degeneracy of mind and physical conditions. It is this nonsense which is demoralizing our nation. Turn your attention to the realities of life about you."[29]

Thus Swamiji inveighed against miracle-mongering and psychological illusions that go by the name of "Jogism" and is regarded by the common people as spirituality. The Buddhist-Tantrikas have been largely responsible for this mentality. To them, alchemic hocus-pocus and magic-jugglery, called supernatural feats (gains of *astasiddi*), were the acme of spirituality.[30] The common people, nay, even many of the so-called educated persons are not yet weaned away from these erroneous notions. Then as a corollary to the above saying Swamiji further said: "We want a religion..... Which will give us faith in ourselves, a national self-respect, and the power to feed and educate the poor and relieve the misery around us..... If you want to find God, serve man! If you want to acquire power,[31] serve your brother-man."[32] Further he says,

28. Ibid: Vol. II, p. 227.
29. "The Life," Vol. II, p. 213.
30. Vide B. N. Datta: "Mystic Tales of Lama Taranatha".
31. Spiritual power. Swamiji was talking with a Theosophist.
32. "The Life": Vol. II, p. 213.

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"Do you love your fellowman? Where else should you go to seek for God! Are not all the poor, the miserable, the weak—Gods? Why not worship them first?"[33]

Thus he visualized God in man. Service to man is to serve God. The sixth item of his ideology is nowadays the advanced opinion of some of the most liberal thinkers of the West[34]—that "Service to man" should be the future religion of the world.

*Seventhly*: He wanted a physically strong race. He said, "First of all, our young men must be strong. Religion will come afterwards. You will be nearer to Heaven through football than through the study of the Gita..... I know where the shoe pinches".[35]

*Eighthly*: The idea of nationality of Swami Vivekananda was, "a sacred ideal, 'whose inmost striving was to express its own conception of ideal manhood'."[36]

It is true that nationality is not a vague concept, it is the means by which every citizen must rise to his full stature. When Swami Vivekananda says that the Indian national ideal "should ever be spirituality,"[37] we understand that it is not Jogism and miracle-mongering which in common parlance is known as spirituality, but that the psyche or the spirit of the man should be developed to its full height.

*Ninthly*: According to Swamiji, the driving force of the achievement of Indian nationality is renunciation. Hence he says: "Buddha had preached renunciation, and in two centuries India had become an Empire. Let her but once more feel the great pulse through all her views, and no power on earth would stand before her newly-awakened energy."[38] A great principle of philosophy of history is expressed here. The great religious reform movements of the Buddha and

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33. Quoted in "The Life," Vol. IV, p. 182.
34. Vide Leuba: "A Psychological Study of Religion," 1912.
35. Works: Vol. III, p. 242.
36-37. "The Life": Vol. IV, p. 197.
38. Ibid: Vol. IV, p. 213.

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the Tirthankaras unsettled the mind of the people as somebody reported to the Buddha, that, "Magadha was trembling like an earthquake." There was a great intellectual awakening of the people. Priestly hold and the fog of obscurantism were cleared away by the preaching of equality of man, and India saw the rise of the unified Maurya Empire. Of course it was the after-effect of renunciation of those who worked for the salvation of the people. Similarly, whatever status present-day India has gained, has been achieved by the renunciation of the workers of the national cause. Her future progress depends on further renunciation.

*Tenthly*: He wanted co-operation or *mutual aid* to be the basis of all our works.[39]

*Eleventhly*: He wanted the *education of the masses* for their upliftment. This only will bring redemption to them from their present-day down-trodden condition, as it will, "put life into this dead mass, dead to almost all moral aspiration, dead to all future possibilities."[40] In a word he wanted the *uprise of the lowly*. That is the burden of his whole theme. With that purpose he went to the West to see things there.

*Lastly*: His watchword was, "Dynamic Religion"[41] and "United India".[42].

Gradually he came to the consciousness that unless the Indian masses who form the majority of the people be raised from their depressed condition, there is no hope for building up a new India. This truth he has been constantly hammering in all his epistles. He wanted equality of man, equal opportunities for all. In those dark days of India, in a priest-ridden country ruled by the foreign imperialists who formed in India an exploiting class by themselves, he advanced the cause of equality of man. He showed that no man is inferior to the other, no class has got special qualification than the other.

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39. Vide "The Master as I Saw Him", p. 171.
40. Works: Vol. V, p. 44.
41. Works: Vol. VIII, p. 415.
42. "The Life", Vol. IV, p. 197.

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He said, "birth is nothing, the environment is everything."[43] Thus he anticipated the present-day anthropologists and biologists in this respect.

But this tocsin-call to the Indian intelligentsia to arouse the masses, "the sleeping Leviathan" as he called them, to regenerate India, fell on deaf ears, in those days. To modern India he was the harbinger of the call for social democracy. He was the first Indian to call himself a *Socialist*.[44] Even he envisaged a new type of civilization for India which will melt down all the past angularities and factions. Thus, he was the *beginner* of New India that is evolving. He says, "we have started a new India-growth—waiting to see what comes."[45]

But all these exhortations were wasted on persons deaf in ears. The Indian intelligentsia, still enmeshed in the strangle-hold of feudal civilization, could not come out of class-incrustation and envisage the possibility of a new social order. Even to them, with the exception of a handful of a few radical intellectuals, the ideal of bourgeois-democracy was not even clear. Their rulers themselves were groping in the dark in those days. The education they were imparting was a reactionary one. There was no light anywhere. The people were not politically conscious; the liberal section of the national bourgeoisie who founded the Indian National Congress, had no clear vision in respect of their ideal. Of course, they wanted a bourgeois-democratic state. But the implications of it was not clear to all. Even, the functions of a bourgeois-democratic revolution are not yet clear to the majority of our intellectuals. Hence, we are witnessing the opposition in the national legislatures to any act that leads to any kind of socio-economic change. When such is the mental outlook of the present-day intellectuals of republican India, what cimmerian darkness enveloped the mind of the people more than half a century ago! Swami

43. "The Master as I Saw Him", p. 309.
44. Works: Vol. VI, pp. 339-344.
45. Works: Vol. III, p. 485.

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Vivekananda came too early in the benighted country called India.

Karl Marx has said that where there is prosperous bourgeoisie, there is prosperous proletarian class.[46] There is correlation between the culture and the growth of each of these social classes. Half a century ago, the condition of the Occidental masses was not much better. The class-consciousness of the masses of Western Europe was little in evidence before. Social-Democracy was in its reforming stage. Social amelioration, social upliftment, were talked about a good deal, but these took the path of slow reform. England was reaping dividends of surplus value through exploitation of her vast fur-flung empire. France was an imperial power extending her colonies and dependencies. Germany was building herself into an industrial power but with no dependencies. Hence, the intellectual revolt against the old order came from Germany. At that time, Russia was an agricultural country ruled by a despotic Czar. The intellectuals were trying to come out of their semi-barbarous civilization with feudal trappings. Hence, there was constant intellectual ferment amongst the intellectuals.[47] But this ferment had not yet then descended into the material plane. The only outburst was in the form of terroristic attempts of the enthusiastic youngmen. The United States of America was a self-centered prosperous country with immense possibility of future growth. Her radical idealistic thinkers were Thoreau, Emerson and Walt Whitman. The co-operative communities based on communistic basis had nearly failed in that wide expanse of a new country with enormous economic resources. Individualistic enterprise had its full play there. As for Asia, Turkey with its religio-feudalistic state and society was the "Sick man of Europe." The newly arisen Japan, ruled for centuries by a feudal-military class, was walking in the foot-steps of militarist Germany. China, the

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46. Vide "Revolution and Counter-Revolution".
47. Vide Masaryk: "Spirit of Russia."

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"celestial" country ruled by the autocratic Manchus was lying down prostrate, being the victim of the vultures of the West. In Swamiji's words "China is like a disorganized mob."[48] But by the time when Swami Vivekananda was in London, the first fluttering of this hitherto somnolent people came to the notice of the outside world, when a young Chinese revolutionary was entrapped in the Chinese Embassy but rescued by the London Police. This was Sun-yat Sen.[49]

Swami Vivekananda after getting warm response from the people of the United States thought that the U. S. A. will be the country that will arrive at the synthesis between the East and the West. But as Romain Rolland says, he was disillusioned about it. Then he turned his eyes towards Russia and China. In order to see Russia personally, he intended to visit that country, but could not carry out his intention in his second trip to the European continent. He said that he wanted to visit foreign[50] countries to exchange notes, as isolation had been the cause of downfall of India.

On this account he turned his eyes towards those countries where would be the first establishment of the *Sudra* (Proletarian) State and would achieve the synthesis between the East and the West. In this matter, as said already, he emphasized that "perhaps Russia will be the first Proletarian State in the world". This prophecy of Swami Vivekananda became true in 1917, when Russia established a Workers' and Peasants' Republic. Thus his prophecy when he said: "Yet, a time will come, when there will be the rising of the Sudra class, with their *Sudra-hood;*.....will gain absolute supremacy in every society" became true.[51] Thus he anticipated the theory of the Proletarian rule euphemistically called "The Dictatorship of the Proletariate" long before it became the

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48. Works: Vol. V, p. 129.
49. Vide Mahendranath Datta: "Vivekananda in London" (in Bengalee). For detailed reference see F. Note 25, Page 14 of this book.
50. Works: Vol. VIII, Epistle LXXXV, p. 400.
51. Works: Vol. IV, p. 401.

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slogan of the Bolschevists.[52] This prophecy, uttered in 1896, is fulfilled in Soviet Russia, and is in the course of fulfilment in "People's China"; also, it is being partially fulfilled where Labor or Socialist Government comes into power.

In this matter of prophecy, further light is thrown on the subject by Sri Hemchandra Ghose, the well-known revolutionary leader with long records of imprisonment in jails, and an indefatigable worker for national cause. Sri H. Ghose at the request of the present-writer has given in writing the reminiscences of his meeting Swami Vivekananda in his younger days at Dacca. He says thus:

"While Swami Vivekananda set out on a tour in the eastern districts of India in 1901, we, the youngmen of Dacca, especially those of us of the Shyamakanta-Parshanath's Gymnasium, hastened to listen to the Hero of the Age. Besides myself, were my comrades-in-faith late Srish Pal, who at a later day, dealt death-penalty to inspector Nandolal Banerjee for the arrest of the first martyr of Bengal in 1908,[53] late Maulvi Alimuddin, popularly known as 'Master Saheb' in the Swadeshi days, Sri Jogendra Datta, the elder brother of Sri Haridas Datta of the Rodda Arms Case in 1914, and a few chosen others. We were there to seek the seer's guidance and *Ashirbad* (blessing) at Mohini babu's villa at Farashganj, Dacca, where Swamiji was staying at the time. We sought to know from him direct and in seclusion as to what he wanted us, young Bengal, to do in reality for Humanity and Patriotism.

"Swamiji endearingly drew us near and patted us with his pet phrase: 'Ye, sons of immortal bliss!' (*Amritasya Putrah*). The very touch and tone electrified us with enthusiasm and surrender. The veins in us quickened and our hearts throbbed. It was the majestic touch of Baptism. The cyclonic monk was speaking before us!

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52. The Social-Democrats deny the slogan as un-Marxian.

53. Regarding the arrest of the first martyr Prafulla Chaki, see the writer's "Second War of Independence", Appendix (in Bengalee).

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"In the course of an intimate exchange of heart, rather communion, so to say, Swamiji emphasized on the fundamental unity of the universal aspects of all religions. 'Expression is life, Contraction is death. And what is religion after all, if it is not realization of the divinity in man?' He questioned, and asked us for the pursuit of a dynamic life dedicated to the cult of Humanism,—*'Manava Dharma'*, and the doctrine of synthesis *'Samanyavada'*, to build up a base of National character in Bengal for India and the world, nay, foremost for the sake of one's own enlightened self and neighbors. 'It is all a question of head and heart. Our conscience dictates the gospel of duty. Virtue ever means close introspection, sincere enthusiasm and honest effort, masculinity that is valour, and self-help with a never-flagging zeal for a righteous cause. Virtue is its own reward. And this virtue is tenacity of purpose and moral stamina. That is real heroism, —*Paurusha* or *Viratva* of the effulgent and efflorescent youth, he impressed on us.

"He stressed on cadre-building for a noble cause. He was not happy with the ways of the then Indian National Congress. 'That is not the way to build up Patriotism anywhere. Beggar's bowl has no place in a Banik's (merchant's) world of machine, mammon and merchandise. Everything has got to be controlled and directed by the invocation of human conscience that is *Mahamaya's* voice—the latent energy in man', the Mahapurusha asserted....'First thing first', he went on, 'and body-building and dare-devilry are the primary concerns before the buoyant young Bengal (*Sariram Adyam*)! This urgency of physical fitness must take the top-most priority even to reading the Bhagavata Gita itself. And in the pursuit of dare-devilry—*Paurusha*, the spirit of chivalry that is *Vir-niti*, must be observed in siding always with the weak and rescuing them. Honor women-folk, as the physical embodiment of Mahamaya herself and the Motherland itself in human form. Know ye not, *Janani Janmabhumischa Swargadapi gariyashi?* (The mother and the motherland is more glorious than Heaven).....I must ask all of you to take to organize social service—*Sanghavada, Sevabrata*

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—with humility and devotion, side by side with study as the fulfilment of all education, for Jiva is Siva, this idea of ideas which will rejuvenate the lowly and make them holy—the *Daridra Narayanas,* with throbbing pulsations of life and vigour with infusion of confidence enough to build their own destiny'.

"Swamiji continued, 'In the psyche of every nation, man and institution, there are the three fundamental qualities—the *Sattva,* the enlightened state, the *Rajas* the dynamic state, and the *Tamas* the dark inert state—all intermingled to a degree or proportion, according to the stamp-on-mind out of one's own commission or omission of discharging duties.' 'As you sow, so you reap, and *Mahamaya* helps those who help themselves', he roared. 'The *Tamas* has enveloped the psyche in us, or else, how could it be possible for any foreigner to come and kick at sweet will the land and people that is India, for centuries?' he questioned. 'Oh, it is no *longer* the *Punyabhumi!* It is the land of downright *Don't touchism* and *Jo-Hukums* (subserviency to the master will)! It is *Dasa-bhumi*—the land of serfs and slaves; of hewers of wood and drawers of water,' he moaned.....

"Swamiji held hopes before us. 'India had a glorious past, India will have a future certainly more majestic. Or else, the Lord of God in Nature will lose all meaning.....An extra dose of *Rajas* only will serve as the elixir of life in India; so the pressing need of the moment is to pursue consciously the quality of *Rajas* that is dynamism. The soul-stirring death-defying Mantram *Abhi*—fearlessness, will shake off age-long vestiges of slave-mentality, superstition and inferiority complex. In order to march boldly in equal pace side by side with other materially-advanced nations of the world—ye, young Bengal, emulate the manly ways of Lakshmi Bai, the Rani of Jhansi, whose gallantry the English Commander has recognized.....Imitate the virtues of other nations, cultivate their technical skill and qualities of life,.....And then, with a modern standard of morale and efficiency attained, pay them, the foreign usurpers, in their own coins in your own country to unfasten the alien octopus-hold on the citadel of Oriental Culture. But know it for certain, mere imitation will lead

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you nowhere. You will be swept away from the moorings of your real life. .....I have come not to destroy but to fulfil. Imitation *in toto* is another form of slavery. What I mean is rational discrimination and assimilation of what is best in other cultures and climes. But let us not forget that Indian culture in its essence is the most sublime in the world. And as such India has a mission to preach and propagate all through the world.....'

"Swamiji then exhorted us with a passion divine to take up the work of service to the poor and the down-trodden, the suppressed and the oppressed, the repressed masses of men that are mere apology of a man. 'All backwardness must vanish. Don't touchism is the sin of sins that has got to go. There are no more *Mlecchhas* or submen in the world. They are *Narayanas'*, he spoke with a loud voice. He gave us a four-fold program of work: 'Going-in among the masses, eradication of Don't touchism, opening of Gymnasium,[54] and Library Movement.'

"The patriot-saint blessed me with a gentle look and said, 'Man-making is my mission of life. Hemchandra! you try with your comrades to translate this mission of mine into action and reality. Read Bankimchandra and Bankimchandra, and emulate his *Desha-Bhakti* and *Santana-Dharma*. Your duty should be service to motherland. India should be freed politically first'. With reverence and awe we paid homage to the Hero. And the seer smiled on us in benediction.

"In the course of further talk, the prophet in Swamiji said, as if lost in a soliloquy: 'Yes, the *Sudras* of the world will rise. And that is the dictate of Social Dynamic that is *Sivam*. It is as clear as day-light that the entire Orient will have a resurrection to build anew a human world. Lo! the future greatness of China, and in the wake of it, of all the Asiatic nations'.

"With humble submission I asked, how he could visualize that.

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54. This is the same message that was left for Satischandra Basu, the founder of Anushilan Samiti, as informed by Swami Saradananda to the former (vide the statement of Satischandra Basu in "Second War of Independence" by the writer).

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The prophet roared in assertion: 'Don't you see, I can see through the veil, the shadow of coming events of the world. By God's grace it has descended on me, this insight of mine, through years of close observation. Study and travel that is *Sadhana*. As the astronomers see the movements of the stars through telescope, likewise the movement of the world falls within the range of my vision. You take it from me, this rising of the *Sudras* will take place first in *Russia*, and then in *China*. *India* will rise next and will play a vital role in shaping the future world.'

"Swami Vivekananda appeared to us to be more a political prophet than a religious teacher. We begged leave of him. And we have ever remembered the words of the Great Master. Along with our hosts of friends and compatriots, we have tried in our humble ways to carry out his behest to build up a better Bengal in a happier India and a better New World to live in. With the books of Bankimchandra and Vivekananda we set out on our pilgrimage for the temple of Liberty with heart within and God overhead.

7|B, Nepal Bhattacharya Street,

18. 5. 1954.
Calcutta-26

(Sd.) Hemchandra Ghose"

The statement of this indefatigable worker for Indian freedom embodying the reminiscences of the talk that he and his friends had with Swamiji in their youthful days, throw a further light on the clairvoyant vision of Swamiji on international politics. If, as narrated beforehand, his vision regarding the country where the first rise of the *Sudra-State* would take place had been doubtful, then after his return from the second trip to the Occident, the clairvoyant vision in this matter was definitely clear. His prophetic insight actually visualized the coming events of the world. His prophecy, as stated by Sri H. Ghose, is a part of the reality of world's history. The "inevitability of history" using the expression of the great Italian patriot Joseph Mazzini, has made British Imperialism quit India by leaving antithesis in the forms of the partition of the peninsula into two States.

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Of course, the synthesis lies in the womb of the future. Yet, "the uprise of the lowly" is the order of the day in the East. Nothing shall be able to prevent it. The inevitability of history is sure to fulfil its destiny, as prophesied by Swamiji, in this ancient land of Bharata. The Dawn of awakening of the masses has begun. The East is awakening. Even the hitherto regarded inert masses of Africa are getting wide awakened. The time-spirit generated by Historical-Materialism is cropping up country after country of the East in the front-line of nationhood. Rejuvenated Asiatic nations are coming to the fore-front of the comity of nations.

Now, let us trace our way to India that is Bharat. India is mutilated, some of the pre-historic and classical parts of Aryavarta have seceded from her. But many a time during her history, Bharat has been divided, yet her mutilated parts have been again restored. The future we leave to the womb of history. The thing to be reckoned at present is, that inspite of her mutilation, India that is Bharat, is a country to be reckoned with. She is gaining a momentum of national force with which she is acquiring a respectful place in the comity of nations. That is the outward expression of the national mind of new Indian Democracy. But what about the inside of the country? Swami Vivekananda has foreseen all these difficulties. How to wield these heterogeneous masses of humanity into one compact whole had been the problem since the time of the ancient patriotic seers.

We know, that the core of the problem remains in the body-politic of the Indian society as yet. Swamiji has denounced child-marriage,[55] has denounced caste system, has denounced class rule, has denounced inequality in the society. On this account he stood for a thorough overhauling of the existing society. We have discussed all these points previously. Now he comes out boldly with the following cultural program: "However much you may parade your descent from Aryan ancestors and sing the glories of ancient India, day and

55. Works: Vol. VIII. See also, "The Master as I Saw Him", p. 283.

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night, and however much you be strutting in the pride of your birth, you, the upper classes of India,—do you think you are alive? You are but mummies ten thousand years old! It is among those whom your ancestors despised as "walking carrions"[56] that the little of vitality there is still in India is to be found; and it is you who are the real "walking corpses."[57]..... In this world of Maya, you are the real illusions.....you, the upper classes of India.....You are the void, the unsubstantial nonentities of the future. Denizens of the Dreamland, why are you loitering away longer? Fleshless and bloodless.....that you are—why do you not quickly reduce yourselves into dust and disappear in the air?..... Now..... in these days of free education and enlightment, pass them on to your heirs, aye, do it as quickly as you can. You merge yourselves in the void and disappear....."[58]

Here, Swami Vivekananda is at his best. The saying that, "What is bred in the bone must assert," is true. What did Swami Vivekananda imbibe in the early part of his youth, and what he learned in foreign countries by exchanging notes, have been spoken out at last. In these utterances he has thrown overboard the incubus of mediaevalism and all that it stands for. He gave a fitting answer to the pretensions of the priesthood, the believers of unchangeability of society (Sanatanists) and to Sankaracharya's attack on the Sudras. Again, he has found out the truth that the perennial source of India's vitality lies with the toiling classes. Elsewhere he has said that the toiling masses produce the wealth. "It is through their physical labor only are possible, the influence of the Brahmans, the progress of the Kshatriyas, and the fortune of the Vaisyas".[59] And he bewailed that their

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56. Allusion to Aitereya Brahmana Aranyaka's saying: "Vangabagadha Cherojanapada" as crows.
57. Allusion to Sankaracharya's attack on the Sudras in the matter of finding out the Varna of King Janasruti in Brahmasutras. It is an answer to Sankara's attack.
58. Works: Vol. VII, pp. 308-9.
59. Works: Vol. IV, pp. 399-400.



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lot was to get chastisements from the Sastras: "Cut out his tongue, chop off his flesh." Thus he asks—"What is their lot in life?"

Swamiji has truly discovered the main spring of Indian society. It is the workers (Sudras?) and the peasants (Aryas) who produced the wealth of the country and the upper classes grew fat on their hard-earned wealth. It is the *Sudraryau* who have been the foundation of Indo-Aryan society. But the temporal and spiritual powers combining together exploited them, degraded them and kept them under subjugation. Hence, we find the injunction that the seat of the *"Sudraryau"* in a sacrificial place is in the fifth row.[60] That means, the toilers are to sit hindmost in a place of religions or in a gathering of the upper classes. In these pithy sayings, Swamiji has denounced the class-character of the Hindu society.

As the remedy, he gives the new program for India—for India of the future that is to be freed from the incubus of caste, class and religious prejudice. He says thus: "Let her arise—out of the peasants' cottage, grasping the plough, out of the huts of the fisherman,.....the grocer's shop, from beside the oven of the fritter-seller. Let her emanate from the factory, from marts and from markets. Let her emerge from the groves and forests, from hills and mountains. These common people have suffered oppression for thousands of years—suffered it without murmur, and as a result have got wonderful fortitude. They have suffered eternal misery, which has given them unflinching vitality.....Such peacefulness, such contentment, such love, such power of silent and incessant work, and such manifestation of lion's strength in times of action—where else will you find these! Skeletons of the past, there, before you, are your successors, the *India that is to be.* Throw those treasure-chests of yours and those jewelled rings among them—as soon as you can; and you—vanish into air, and be seen no more—only keep your

60. Vide Latyayana Srauta Sutras.

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ears open. No sooner will you disappear than you will hear the inaugural shout of Renaissant India".[61]

This composition was written in Bengalee language for the Udbodhana magazine while he was *en route* to the West for the second time. Since then, this piece of writing has become classical in Bengalee literature; but how many have understood the sense of it! Then from England he went to America. There as early as 1896 he has prophesied that either Russia or China will be the first "Proletarian State" in the world. Later on, during the Paris Exhibition in August in 1900 his American friends, Mrs. Ole Bull and others introduced Peter Kropotkin to him. But a "State" is abhorrent to an anarchist.[62]

Hence, it is clear that the idea of a new world order having as its foundation the civilization evolved by the toiling masses, has been the prophetic clairvoyance of Swami Vivekananda before 1900 A.D. We have given cogent arguments that this idea was not the borrowed clap-trap of Socialist movement of the West. The split in the Russian Social-Democratic Party took place in 1906. Did Plekhanov and Ulianov-Lenin dream of a Proletarian State with a civilization of its own in that time? Did Sun-yat Sen ever dream of it? Leon Trotsky says that Lenin in 1905 advanced the idea of "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry." Then he says, "This formula is now repeated in the Communist International as a sort of supra-historical dogma.....in 1905, it was a question with Lenin of a strategical hypothesis which required a test in the reality of the class-struggle".[63] Further Trotsky says: "Plekhanov, the brilliant progenitor of Russian Revolution, considered the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat a delusion in contemporary Russia. The same standpoint was defended not only by the Mensheviks, but also by the overwhelming majority of the leading Bolsheviks, among them all the present party

61. Works: Vol. VII, pp. 308-310.
62. Vide P. Kropotkin: "The State—Its Role".
63. L. Trotsky: 'Permanent Revolution,' 1930, pp. 19, 23.

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leaders without exception, who at that time were resolute revolutionary democrats."[64]

The idea of a Proletarian Culture, so far is known to the writer, is to be noticed in the Socialist Literature of the second decade of the twentieth century in Germany, and so far it is ascertained that the talk of break between Bourgeois-Democratic Culture and Socialist Culture, was not so sharp at least in the English-speaking countries. Some radical Socialist thinker of the continent might have adumbrated it. As yet, there has been no clear-cut vision of a Proletarian Culture in Socialist thought.[65] Karl Marx's criticism to "Gotha Program" gives the vision of a lower phase of Socialism whose norm of economic equality will be—"to each man according to his work," and of a higher phase of Socialism whose norm of economic equality will be—"to each man according to his need." Of course it is implied that in a Socialist or Communist society everybody will contribute to build-up the common culture which will be devoid of class character. But what we contend is, that seeing the Occidental countries in his first tour in 1893-1896, Swamiji adumbrated the coming catastrophe for Occidental civilization before 1900 A.D.! As a remedy he conceived the idea of a Proletarian Civilization. Therein lies his prophetic instinct. The two trips in the West made him shed his notions of Indian mediaevalism and mysticism. How many of his Indian fellow-countrymen have noticed this so long? His Occidental disciples remembered the importance of the vision after Russia became a Proletarian State.

Again, as a panacea for all social evils of India, he wanted that the Indian masses should evolve that civilization. He wanted mediaeval India with its priestcraft and epigonous incrustations should vanish. A new India out of the masses with a new civilization of its own, should grow in the place of the decrepit old one which he described as the mummy

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64. L. Trotsky: "Permanent Revolution", 1930, pp. 19, 23.
65. Lately, Stalin has denounced the division of culture. He said that culture is one.

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of the past. This is his program for reconstruction of the Indian society. This is the task of New India. Did any Indian utter such a radical saying as that in the previous generation!

Further, he expressed in a figurative language, that the past should vanish leaving its treasures to its future proletarian successors. In this rhetorical expression lies the sociological truth, that in a given country, one phase of civilization slowly gives place to another phase without being completely obliterated. One phase of culture bequeaths its best achievements as a legacy to the succeeding phase. The modern archaeologists and artists speak of it in the case of Indian Culture as well.[66] Hence, Swamiji exhorts the custodians of effete mediaevalism whom he calls the "skeletons of the past," to vanish by leaving the best of the past culture to the future successors who are the masses.

Swamiji has repeatedly hammered the truth that the masses are the perennial source of strength of the Indian society. It is a historical fact. All our Mantra-seeing Rishis of the Vedas, all our philosophers, all our saints, all our conquerors came from the masses or are descended from the men from the masses. Even our *Avatars* and *Arhats* and *Jinas* were no exceptions to this law of Indian evolution. Sri Krishna came from the *Dasa* class as the Rig-Veda says that the Jadus were Dasas. The Mahabharata acknowledges it.[67] Of course, Rama, a fictitious hero was a prince. That is the only exception, but there is no historicity behind him. On the other hand, the Buddha and the Jaina Tirthankaras inspite of their aristocratic geneological pretentions, were nothing but the sons of petty leaders of agricultural tribes. On this historical perspective, Swami Vivekananda lays his hope for future India on the masses. He wants their uprise. They should take the leadership of the country.

As Swamiji's foreseeing vision has come true elsewhere, what about it in India, his own country? Now, the first obstacle

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66. Vide B. N. Datta: "Indian Culture in Relation to Art".
67. Vide Sabha Parva where Sisupala calls Krishna—a Dasa.

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is removed, India is now free of foreign yoke. How India is going to resuscitate herself is the object worth seeing. Can we visualize a democratic India with an *egalitarian* society in the framework of bourgeois-democracy which is the objective of our National Constitution? Will it solve the age-long Indian problems and complexities? Here, it should be noted, that a change from foreign imperialist rule to Indian plutocratic rule is not the thing wanted. The masses are getting class-conscious. The dialectics of Historical-Materialism is hastening the upward trend of the consciousness of the masses. Nothing can check it. As Swamiji has prophesied regarding the world-proletariate, likewise, nothing can check the rule of the toiling masses of India in near future. Swamiji has exclaimed, "Ye, ever-trampled laboring masses of India! I bow to you".[68]

But how to arrive at the goal is the question. Is history going to repeat itself? Are we going to have a foreign domination once again? It seems that we are between the scylla of American and foreign economic strangle-hold[69] on the one hand, and the charybdis of attempt on the part of some for affinity to Soviet Russia on the other. Wherein lies our salvation!

Swami Vivekananda was neither a Marxist nor an economist. But with his prophetic instinct he adumbrated the stage which will bring the resurrection of the Indian people—a casteless and classless society based on the new culture of the Indian masses. It is this new India that should bring the synthesis between the East and the West as was desired by him.

It is a pious wish as yet, but why should it not fructify in India? India has shown her race-capacity in the past and in the present. Therein lies our hope, our future growth and prosperity. The nation must ponder about the program of Swami Vivekananda in the perspective of an independent India, and work out its future advancement.

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68. Works: Vol. VII, p. 241.
69. Vide Natarajan: 'American Shadow Over India'.

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XIV

# THE SAYINGS OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

*WITH*

# AUTHOR'S COMMENTARY

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## ANTHROPOLOGICAL SAYINGS

The only way to bring about the levelling of caste is to appropriate the culture, the education which is the strength of the higher castes. That done, you have what you want.

In connection with this I want to discuss one question which has a particular bearing with regard to Madras. There is a theory that there was a face of mankind in Southern India called Dravidians, entirely differing from another race in Northern India called the Aryans, and that the Southern India Brâhmins are the only Aryans that came from the North, the other men of Southern India belong to an entirely different caste and race to those of Southern India Brahmins. Now I beg your pardon, Mr. Philologist, this is entirely unfounded. The only proof of it is that there is a difference of language between the North and the South. I do not see any other difference.....Where is the difference? A little difference of language. But the Brahmins are a race that came here speaking the Sanskrit language! Well then, they took up the Dravidian language and forgot their Sanskrit. Why should not the other castes have done the same? Why should not all the other castes have come one after the other from Northern India, taken up the Dravidian language, and so forgotten their own? That is an argument working both ways. Do not believe in such silly things. There may have been a Dravidian people who vanished from here, and the few who remained lived in forests and other places. It is quite possible that the language may have been taken up, but all these are Aryans who came from the North. The whole of India is Aryan, nothing else.

Then there is the other idea that the Sudra caste are surely the aborigines. What are they? They are slaves. They say history repeats itself. The Americans, English, Dutch, and the Portuguese got hold of the poor Africans, and made them work hard while they lived, and their children of mixed birth were born in slavery and kept in that condition for a

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long period. From that wonderful example, the mind jumps back several thousand years and fancies that the same thing happened here, and our archæologist[1] dreams of India being full of dark-eyed aborigines, and the bright Aryan came from—the Lord knows where. According to some, they came from Central Thibet, others will have it that they came from Central Asia. There are patriotic Englishmen who think that the Aryans were all red-haired. Others, according to their idea, think that they were all black-haired. If the writer happens to be a black-haired man, the Aryans were all black-haired. Of late, there was an attempt made to prove that the Aryans lived on the Swiss lakes. I should not be sorry if they had been all drowned there, theory and all. Some say now that they lived at the North Pole. Lord bless the Aryans and their habitations! As for the truth of these theories, there is not one word in our Scriptures, not one, to prove that the Aryan ever came from anywhere outside of India, and in ancient India was included Afghanistan. There it ends.

And the theory that the Sudra caste were all non-Aryans and they were a multitude, is equally illogical and equally irrational. It could not have been possible in those days that a few Aryans settled and lived there with a hundred thousand slaves at their command. These slaves would have eaten them up, made "chutney" of them in five minutes. The only explanation is to be found in the Mahabharata, which says that in the beginning of the Satya Yuga there was one caste,[2] the Brahmins, and then by difference of occupations they went on dividing themselves into different castes, and that is the only true and rational explanation that has been given.

*Works: Vol. III, Pp. 291-293.*

Swamiji has hit the nail of Indian Anthropology on the right point. So long we have been fed with British-imperialist cants

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1. Swamiji means anthropologist.
2. *Varna* in original language. It has been noticed elsewhere that *Varna* is not caste.

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about Indian Anthropology. We forget that science had been officialized in India during the foreign rule. The "Dravidian race" is an invention of Bishop Caldwell. He based it on language. Now-a-days, the anthropologists speak of the pre-Dravidians who are named as *Veddaid* by the German scientists. The German scientists never accepted the theory of a Dravidian race. The German anthropologist E. Von Eickstedt calls the South-Indians as *Mediterraneans.* The same nomenclature he applies to the North-Indians as well.[3] Again, there is no proof that the Sudras are the descendants of the so-called Aborigines. They are Aryas according to Manu. Somatic investigations belie this theory.

> The modern enthnologists hold that variety of complexion is due to intermixture of blood. Though the hot or cold climate of the place to a certain extent affects the complexion, no doubt, yet the main cause of its change is hereditary. According to the Hindu *Shastras,* the three Hindu castes, *Brahmana, Kshatriya,* and *Vaishya,* and the several nations outside India, to wit, *Cheen, Hun, Darad, Pahlava, Yavana* and *Khash* are all Aryas. This *Cheen* of our *Shâstras* is not the modern Chinaman. .....There was a distinct, powerful nation, called *Cheen,* living in the north-eastern parts of Kashmir, and the Darads lived where are now seen the hill-tribes between India and Afghanistan. Some remnants of the ancient *Cheen* are yet to be found in very small numbers, and Daradisthan is yet in existence.....An ancient tribe of *Huns* reigned for a long period in the North-Western parts of India. The Thibetans now call themselves *Hun,* but this Hun is perhaps "Hune".....According to Prjevalski and the Duc d' Orleans, the Russian and French travellers, there are still found in some parts of Thibet, tribes with faces and eyes of the Aryan type. *Yavana* was the name given to the Greeks..... By the word *Pahlava* is meant the ancient Parsees, speaking the Pahlava tongue. Even now,

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3. Vide B. N. Datta: "Races of India" in Journal of the Departments of Letters, Calcutta University, Vol. 26, (1935).

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*Khash* denotes the semi-civilised Aryan tribes living in mountainous regions and in the Himalayas, and the word is still used in this sense. In that sense, the present Europeans are the descendants of the *Khash;* in other words, those Aryan tribes that were uncivilised in ancient days are all *Khash.*

In the opinion of modern savants, the Aryans had reddish-white complexions, black or red hair, straight noses and well-drawn eyes, etc.....Where the complexion is dark, there the change has come to pass owing to the mixture of the pure Aryan blood with black races. They hold that there are still some tribes to the west of the Himalayan borders who are of pure Aryan blood, and that the rest are all of mixed blood; otherwise, how could they be dark? But the European Pandits ought to know by this time that, in the southern parts of India, many children are born with red hair, which after two or three years changes into black, and that in the Himalayas many have red hair and blue or grey eyes. (A)

Let the Pandits fight among themselves; it is the Hindus who have all along called themselves Aryas. Whether of pure or mixed blood, the Hindus are Aryas; there it rests. If the Europeans do not like us, Aryas, because we are dark, let them take another name for themselves—what is that to us?

"Whether black or white, it does not matter; but of all the nations of the world, the Hindus are the handsomest and finest in feature....This fact is known all over the world. (B)

*Works: Vol. V, Pp. 366-368.*

(A) In North India many boys are with ashy or grey hair-color i.e., of lighter shade than no. 27 (jet black) of Eugene Fischer's table. Further, men with tawny-colored hair (*pingala*) are noticeable from ancient times. Again, men with red or sandy-colored hair is to be met with once in a while. Besides, eye iris-color extending from light-brown to light-grey (*Hell-grau*) of Martin's table is discernible.[4] Again, the

4. Vide Dr. B. N. Datta: Note on the presence of light-colored eye-iris amongst the population of North Eastern India in "Man in India", Vol. XVIII. No. I.

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investigators note the presence of blue-eyed men in North-West Frontier and in the Deccan.

(B) Here, Swamiji gives an anthropological exposition of the tribes living outside North-Indian border as was discovered during his life time. Anthropology is a new subject in the field of enquiry. It is regarded as an abstract science. Except somatological part of it, much of it is speculative. (Nobody has as yet been able to give a clear exposition of the cause of the origin of skin-color, contour of the head, nose etc., amongst different races of mankind). The most unfortunate part of anthropology is that during its inception, it got enmeshed in national-chauvinism of each country. Moreover, during the colonial epoch of the latter part of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, anthropology became the hand-maid of the politicians of the imperial Occidental countries. Hence, white man's divinity in the forms—"White man's burden", "Control of the tropics" etc., began to be formulated. We had to be edified in reading such stuff in our university courses. But the present-day political condition of Asia and Africa gives the lie to the imperialist cants.

Swami Vivekananda was the first Indian to raise his voice against this false foreign propaganda. But India hearkened him not. ("A white man" was still divine in India of that time). And our scientists and so-called historians had to *kow-tow* to their foreign masters for the sake of their self-existence. On this account, all erroneous and disparaging theories about India and her civilisation are still current in the country. It is to be hoped that in independent India, in future, thinkers and scientists with independent mind will give a proper evaluation of their country and her culture.

Here we must say that the hypothesis of an Indian in the matter of racial origin of his ancestors and their habitat is as much to be respected as those of the past rulers of India and their kinsmen. The Sanskrit texts do not tell us about the Hyperborean or North-European or Caspian or Central-Asiatic origin of the Indo-Aryans. Of course, the Rig-Veda speaks of the river *Rasa* (*Avestic Ranha*) which might have been a river beyond the

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Paropamisus (*Hindukush*) range. This range must have been the axis around which the Indo-Aryans developed.

> And what your European Pandits say about the Aryan's swooping down from some foreign land, snatching away the lands of the aborigines and settling in India by exterminating them, is all pure nonsense, foolish talk! Strange, that our Indian scholars, too, say amen to them; and all these monstrous lies are being taught to our boys! This is very bad, indeed.
>
> * * * * *
>
> In what Veda, in what *Sukta*, do you find that the Aryans came into India from a foreign country? Where do you get the idea that they slaughtered the wild aborigines? What do you gain by talking such nonsense?.....
>
> * * * * *
>
> The object of the peoples of Europe is to exterminate all, in order to live themselves. The aim of the Aryans is to raise all up to their own level, nay, even to a higher level than themselves. The means of European civilisation is the sword; of the Aryans, the division into different Varnas.
>
> *Works: Vol. V, Pp. 436-439.*

We have already said that anthropology has been a handmaid of Occidental imperialistic propaganda down to the days of Naziism. The "Aryan" theory has become a part of politics. It got entangled in the whirl-pool of national chauvinism of each imperialist country.[5] The acme of it reached in Nazi Germany. Dr. Koepper, the editor of "Anthropos", says that the original home of the Indo-Europeans cannot be settled as yet. Of course, he admits that the majority of the ethnologists opine that that home has been Asia. By "Aryan" he defines ethnic-culture community.[6]

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5. Vide Ripley: "Aryan Controversy" in "Races of Europe"; Guenther's "Racial Realities of Europe": A Nazi Text-Book.
6. Vide "Anthropos". No. 30. (1935).

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Dr. Eickstedt opines that the ancestors of the Vedic Aryas lived on the Hindukush as Proto-Mediterraneans in late Ice Age. The Rig-Veda knew no country outside India (East Afghanistan was included in it as indicated in a hymn to Vayu). The theory of a North-European origin of the Vedic people is a blatant imperialistic propaganda which has mis-fired itself. The Rig-Veda speaks of black-skinned rishis and persons of dark-brown skin as well as of golden complexion.

The Somatic heterogeneity of the Indo-Aryans from the Vedic days down to today, prove that there have been no extermination of the so-called aborigines who exist still today. Assimilation has been the key-note of Indo-Aryan polity. The conservative Smriti-legislators inspite of their class-character could not deny it. India did not repeat the histories of the colonization of the Europeans in South-Africa, Australia, and in North-America.

In the matter of anthropology we must clearly understand that Race, Language and Culture are not identical connotations. The imperialist anthropotheosophy is not science. If the Aryas are to be identified as of blonde-blue-eyed variety of human species and if such a variety exists in the North-West-Frontier of old undivided India, then how is it that while the dark-skinned black-eyed Aryas of India proper built a civilization rivalling Egypt and Greece of antiquity, and their descendants are marching abrest with the advanced nations of the modern world, while the so-called blonde-element of the North-Frontier region is still in a very backward stage of civilization? Here, we also state that the Latin and the Slavic schools of anthropology have different opinions regarding the "Aryan" question. We again state that the European "Aryan" is a different conception from the Sanskrit *Arya*.

> By-the-bye, whatever scruples I may have had as to the Swiss-lake origin of the Aryans, have been taken clean off my mind. The Swiss is a Tartar *minus* a pigtail.
>
> ***Works: Vol. IV, P. 388.***

The lake-dwelling origin of the Aryans has been given up. The

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German scholars lately began to harp on the "Baltic origin". A few talked of South Russia. But the Soviet-Russian scientists have denounced all these national-chauvinist theories emanating from Germany.

It is noteworthy that the Swiss-French anthropologist Lapouge's observation of the Frenchmen tally with that of Swami Vivekananda. Lapouge said that if the color of a Frenchman be changed to yellow, he will be turned into a Chinese.

> Two curious nations there have been—sprung of the same race, but placed in different circumstances and environments, working out the problems of life each in its own particular way. I mean the ancient Hindu and the ancient Greek. The Indian Aryan, bounded on the north by the snow-caps of the Himalayas, with fresh-water rivers like rolling oceans surrounding him in the plains, with eternal forests which, to him, seemed to be the end of the world,—turned his vision inward; and given the natural instinct, the superfine brain of the Aryan, with this sublime scenery surrounding him, the natural result was—that he became introspective. The analysis of his own mind was the great theme of the Indo-Aryan. With the Greek, on the other hand, who arrived at a part of the earth which was more beautiful than sublime, the beautiful islands of the Grecian Archipelago, nature all round him generous yet simple—his mind naturally went outside. It wanted to analyse the external world. And as a result we find that from India have sprung all the analytical sciences, and from Greece all the sciences of generalisation. The Hindu mind went on in its own direction and produced the most marvellous results. Even at the present day, the logical capacity of the Hindus, and the tremendous power which the Indian brain still possesses, is beyond compare.....At the same time when the national vigour went, perhaps one or two centuries before the Mohammedan conquest of India, this national faculty became so much exaggerated that it degraded itself, and we find some of this degradation in everything in India, in art, in music, in sciences, in everything. In art, no more was there a broad conception, no more the sym-

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metry of form and sublimity of conception, but the tremendous attempt at the ornate and florid style had arisen. The originality of the race seemed to have been lost. In music no more were there the soul-stirring ideas of the ancient Sanskrit music, no more did each note stand, as it were, on its own feet, and produce the marvellous harmony, but each note had lost its individuality. The whole of modern music is a jumble of notes, a confused mass of curves. That is a sign of degradation in music. So, if you analyse your idealistic conceptions, you will find the same attempt at ornate figures, and loss of originality. And even in religion, your special field, there came the most horrible degradations. What can you expect of a race which for hundreds of years has been busy in discussing such momentous problems as whether we should drink a glass of water with the right hand or the left? What more degradation can there be than that the greatest minds of a country have been discussing about the kitchen for several hundreds of years, discussing whether I may touch you or you touch me, and what is the penance for this touching! The themes of the Vedanta, the sublimest and the most glorious conceptions of God and soul ever preached on earth, were half-lost, buried in the forests, preserved by a few Sannyasins, while the rest of the nation discussed the momentous questions of touching each other, and dress and food. The Mohammedan conquest gave us many good things, no doubt; even the lowest man in the world can teach something to the highest; at the same time it could not bring vigour into the race. Then for good or evil, the English conquest of India took place. Of course every conquest is bad, for conquest is an evil, foreign Government is an evil, no doubt, but even through evil comes good sometimes, and the great good of the English conquest is this: England, nay the whole of Europe, has to thank Greece for its civilisation. It is Greece that speaks through everything in Europe. Every building, every piece of furniture has the impress of Greece upon it; European science and art are nothing but Grecian. To-day the ancient Greek is meeting the ancient Hindu on the soil of India. Thus, slowly and silently, the leaven has



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come, the broadening out, the life-giving, and the revivalist movement, that we see all around us,.....we are finding out to-day that these generous impulses which are at work, these broader conceptions of life, are the logical interpretation of what is in our ancient books.....To become broad, to go out, to amalgamate, to universalise, is the end of our aims. And all the time we have been making ourselves smaller and smaller, and dissociating ourselves, contrary to the plans laid down in our Scriptures.

Several dangers are in the way, and one is that of the extreme conception that we are *the* people in the world. With all my love for India, and with all my patriotism.....I cannot but think that we have to learn many things from other nations.... At the same time we must not forget that we have also to teach a great lesson to the world.....The first manifest effect of life is expansion. You must expand if you want to live. .....I went to America and Europe,.....I have to, because that is the first sign of the revival of national life, expansion. This reviving national life, expanding inside,. threw me off and thousands will be thrown off in that way. Mark my words, it has got to come if this nation lives at all.

*Works: Vol. III, Pp. 269-327.*

Here Swamiji gives a delineation of the development of the minds of the Hellenic and Indo-Aryans, developing separately each in its own environment, though ethnically they had much in common in the beginning.

In the latter part of his writing, Swamiji properly evaluates the degeneration of the Indo-Aryan mind on the eve of the Turkish-Moslem conquest. In the end he speaks of expansion of national life which is a sign of regeneration.

A veritable ethnological museum!

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A gentle yet clear brushing off of the cobwebs of the so-called Aryan theory and all its vicious corollaries is therefore absolutely necessary, especially for the South, and a proper self-

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respect created by a knowledge of the past grandeur of one of the great ancestors of the Arya race—the great Tamilians. We stick, in spite of Western theories, to that definition of the word "Arya", which we find in our sacred books, and which includes only the multitude we now call Hindus. This Arya race, itself a mixture of two great races, Sanskrit-speaking and Tamil-speaking, applies to all Hindus alike. That the Sudras have in some Smritis been excluded from this epithet means nothing, for the Sudras were and still are only the waiting Aryas—Aryas in novitiate.

* * * * *

We are glad also, that he[7] boldly pushes forward the Accado-Sumerian racial identity of the ancient Tamilians..... We would suggest, also, that the land of Punt of the Egyptians was not only *Malabar,* but that the Egyptians as a race bodily migrated from Malabar across the ocean and entered the delta along the course of the Nile from north to south, to which Punt they have been always fondly looking back as the home of the blessed.

This is a move in the right direction. Detailed and more careful work is sure to follow with a better study of the Tamilian tongues and the Tamilian elements found in the Sanskrit literature, philosophy and religion.

*Works: Vol. IV, Pp. 242-248.*

Here Swamiji discusses about the much-vexed question about the "Aryans" and "Dravidians" created by the imperialists. Now-a-days, the philologists speak of Sumero-Akkadian words in Indo-European languages. Again, they speak of pre-Dravidian words to be found in the Veda, etc. From all these are clear that Swamiji was *encourant* with the latest anthropological and philological investigations regarding things Indian.

Regarding the misinterpretation of Occidental theories as applied to Indian history by the Indian dilletants see the presidential address of Dr. P. V. Kane at the Historical Congress held in

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7. Pandit D. Savariroyan: *Writer.*

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1953. Here, two things must be said that the noted German anthropologists never acknowledged the existence of a "Dravidian" race. The latest English scientist Haddon has said, that "Apart from dark-color of skin, there are many points of resemblance between the Dravidian and Mediterranean peoples"[8] He says that there is a "Pre-Dravidian" race which as noted beforehand is called by the German anthropologists as *Veddaid*. Unfortunately, the Indians have *kow-towed* to the European vagaries. Regarding this mentality Kane says: "Speaking with the greatest respect for the industrious and learned scholars of the West, I cannot help observing that their conclusions are extremely one-sided and that they have often built huge structures on very meagre foundations and made too much of very disputable evidence and it is to be regretted that many Western writers and Indian scholars also have blindly followed in the wake of the pioneers and added their own imaginary conclusions without carefully and cautiously weighing the evidence offered and the probabilities".[9]

Again, the Vedic "Arya" is not the imaginary *Aryan* of the European chauvinists. They are not united amongst themselves in this matter. National rivalry stands on their way of unity. Lastly, as a reaction to German Naziism, Slavic School of Science has taken its rise. They have thrown the researches of the West European Orientology to the four winds. Academician Struve of Soviet-Russia sees the Aryans to have been a people of Asia-Minor who called themselves *Harrish*. And their language was a branch of the Japhetic group of language of the Caucasus. Further he says, this name Harri or Arya was borrowed by the neighbouring Persians, etc.[10]

On the other hand, the latest finding of Prof. Hrozny of Prague University[11] is that the *Hurri* (not *Harri*) people who dwelt on the region of Syria was a non-Indo-European speaking people. It is they who settled in the Indus Valley and became the progeni-

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8. Vide "Races of Man". Pp. 107-111.
9. Presidential Speech: Pp. 11-12.
10. Vide "Moscow News", May 28, 1943.
11. Vide "Histoire de L'Asie Anterieure: de L' Inde et de La Crete". 1947.

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tors of the so-called pre-historic Indus Valley people whom he named "Proto-Indians". Again, he claims that he has deciphered the Indus Valley script and found some words viz. *Shiya, Shiyas; Nataya, Natash;* etc. which sound like *Shiva* (=Durga) and *Nata.* He says that the Proto-Indian god Natash, Nataya corresponds without doubt with the dancing *Nataraja.*[12] Again *Tata, Tatash,* means in Hettitehieroglypic "father". It of course sounds like Sanskrit *Tata* which means father. Further, *Ushi, Ushish, Ushaee* can be compared with Vedic goddess *Usha.*[13] These are according to him non-Indo-European words, but these sound to be good Sanskritic ones. Again, he speaks of the non-Sanskrit-speaking Indo-Europeans contributing largely to Proto-Indian culture of Indus Valley. Further, he says, that the Mitannians (Mitannu) speaking Sanskrit language were the forbears of Vedic Indra, Varuna-worshipping people. Thus, Slavic scholarship places the original cradle of the Aryans in Asia Minor.[14]

But why on earth the European fantasies are to be accredited by the Indian scholars and no attention be paid to the findings of the Indian scholars like Prannath, Swami Sankarananda. The latter, taking the key of the Tantrik mystic words has claimed to have deciphered the Indus Valley script. He claims to have found the words: *Panaya, Pakta, Yama, Kathopanishad,* etc. from the seals discovered at Mahenjo-daro.[15] These are surely Vedic or Indo-Aryan words. The present-writer has said elsewhere that "the presence of the Indo-Aryans cannot be denied in Indus Valley civilization. At Harappa their presence is clearly discernible".

Lastly, instead of importing the historical peoples of India from the outside, why a reflex movement has not been possible from India to the outside as has taken place in historical period? In pre-historic times India was a bridge in the passage of migrations as it falls within the "Australia to Gibraltar line" as

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12-13. Ibid. Pp. 258-263.

14. Vide discussion about it in "Germannen und Indo-Germannen" by S. Feist, a German scholar.

15. Vide "Modern Review", May, 1954.

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delineated by the anthropologist Prof. Von Luschan of Berlin University. Indian Puranas speak of the migrations of some of the Jadu clans, viz., *Anu, Dhruhyu* to the land of the *Mlecchas.* In historic period we find the Indians establishing a kingdom in Armenia which was destroyed by the fanatic St. Gregory, the Illuminator in 304 A.D.[16] Why such a migration from India had not been possible in pre-historic wandering tribal period?

In independent India, the scholars should shed off inferiority complex and make researches of their own history, and arrive at right conclusions regarding the achievement of their forbears. This is not chauvinism but attempt at proper evaluation of history.

## SOCIOLOGICAL SAYINGS

Think of the last six hundred or seven hundred years of degradation, when grown-up men by the hundreds have been discussing for years whether we should drink a glass of water with the right hand or the left, whether the hand should be washed three times or four times, whether we should gargle five or six times. What can you expect from men who pass their lives in discussing such momentous questions as these, and writing most learned philosophies on them! ....It is a sure sign of softening of the brain when the mind cannot grasp the higher problems of life;.....This state of things has first to be thrown overboard, and then we must stand up, be active and strong; and then we shall recognise our heritage to that infinite treasure, the treasure our forefathers have left for us, a treasure that the whole world requires to-day.

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16. Vide V. Langlois: "Collection des Histoiries aniens et medemes d l' Armenie". 1817; M. L. Sett: "History of the Armenians in India", 1897; Lassen: Z. F. D. Kunde des Margenlandes Bd. 1. P. 233, etc.

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> The world will die if this treasure is not distributed. Bring it out, distribute it broadcast.
>
> *Works: Vol. III, P. 167.*

Here Swamiji truly evaluates the effect of slavery on the Indo-Aryan mind. The Nibandhas and the latter-day Socio-religious texts are nothing but the "sure sign of softening of the brain" of the Indo-Aryans. Swamiji is right that these social rules still governing the Hindus have got to be thrown overboard before India stands up on her own legs. This appeal of Swamiji to do away with the debris of mediaeval epigones applies to the sects of other persuations as well. All suffer from the same disease.

> So every improvement in India requires first of all an upheaval in religion. Before flooding India with socialistic or political ideas, first deluge the land with spiritual ideas ..... In the Kali Yuga there is one Karma left. Sacrifices and tremendous Tapasyas are of no avail now. Of Karma one remains, and that is the Karma of giving. And of these gifts, the gift of spirituality and spiritual knowledge is the highest; the next gift is the gift of secular knowledge; the next is the gift of life; and the fourth is the gift of food.
>
> *Works: Vol. III, Pp. 221-222.*

By "upheaval of religion" Swamiji must have meant intellectual ferment. That is moderately taking place since the Renaissance of India. And we are reaping as we have sowed. Today, the only *Karma* is the up-building of the country.

> As in a universal sense, the primal state is a state of sameness of the qualitative forces—a disturbance of this equilibrium and all succeeding struggles to regain it, composing what we call the manifestation of nature, this universe, which state of things remains as long as the primitive sameness is not reached—so, in a restricted sense

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on our own earth, differentiation and its inevitable counterpart, this struggle towards homogeneity, must remain as long as the human race shall remain as such, creating strongly marked peculiarities between ethnic divisions, subraces and even down to individuals in all parts of the world.

In this world of impartial division and balance therefore, each nation represents, as it were, a wonderful dynamo for the storage and distribution of a particular species of energy, and amidst all other possessions that particular property shines forth as the special characteristic of that race. And as any upheaval in any particular part of human nature, though affecting others more or less, stirs to its very depth that nation of which it is a special characteristic, and from which as a centre it generally starts, so any commotion in the religious world is sure to produce momentous changes in India, that land which again and again has had to furnish the centre of the widespread religious upheavals, for, sbove all, India is the land of religion.

Each man calls that alone real which helps him to realise his ideal.

* * * * *

The majority of mankind can only understand power when it is presented to them in a concrete form, fitted to their perceptions...And India, for centuries at the feet of foreign conquerors, without any idea or hope of resistance, without the least solidarity among its masses, without the least idea of patriotism, must needs appear to such, as a land of rotten bones, a lifeless putrescent mass.

It is said—the fittest alone survive. How is it, then, that the most unfitted of all races, according to commonly accepted ideas, could bear the most awful misfortunes that ever befell a race, and yet not show the least signs of decay?

* * * * *

In religion lies the vitality of India, and so long as the

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Hindu race do not forget the great inheritance of their forefathers, there is no power on earth to destroy them.

* * * * *

Every critical student knows that the social laws of India have always been subject to great periodic changes. At their inception, these laws were the embodiment of a gigantic plan, which was to unfold itself slowly through time. The great seers of ancient India saw so far ahead of their time that the world has to wait centuries yet to appreciate their wisdom, and it is this very inability, on the part of their own descendants, to appreciate the full scope of this wonderful plan, that is the one and only cause of the degeneration of India.

Ancient India had for centuries been the battle-field for the ambitious projects of two of her foremost classes—the Brâhmans and the Kshatriyas.

On the one hand, the priesthood stood between the lawless social tyranny of the Princes over the masses, whom the Kshatriyas declared to be their legal food. On the other hand, the Kshatriya power was the one potent force which struggled with any success against the spiritual tyranny of the priesthood, and the ever-increasing change of ceremonials, which they were forging to bind down the people with.

The tug of war began in the earliest periods of the history of our race, and throughout the Srutis it can be distinctly traced.

The ambition of these two classes to be the masters of the poor and ignorant was there, and the strife once more became fierce.....but at last it broke out as a victory for the Kshatriyas, a victory for Jnanam, for liberty—and ceremonial had to go down, much of it for ever. This upheaval was what is known as the Buddhistic reformation. On the religious side, it represented freedom from ceremonial; on the political side, overthrowal of the priesthood by the Kshatriyas.

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* * * * *

In spite of its wonderful moral strength, Buddhism was extremely iconoclastic.....Although it partially succeeded in putting down the animal sacrifices of the Vedas, it filled the land with temples, images, symbols, and bones of saints.

* * * * *

By this time, an entirely new chapter had opened in the history of India. The ancient Kshatriyas and the Brahmans had disappeared.

* * * * *

They had entirely disappeared, except here and there a few mongrel clans claiming to be Brahmans and Kshatriyas, .....they had to sit in sackcloth and ashes, in all humility, to learn at the feet of the Southerners.....

Thus this wave of reform, which came from the South, benefited to a certain extent the priesthood, and the priests only. For the rest of India's millions, it forged more chains than they had ever known before.

The Kshatriyas have always been the backbone of India, ....and throughout the history of India they ever formed the invulnerable barrier to aggressive priestly tyranny.

When the greater part of their number sank into ignorance, and another portion mixed their blood with savages from Central Asia and lent their swords to establish the rules of priests in India, her cup became full to the brim,..... Priestcraft is the bane of India.

*Works: Vol. IV, Pp. 267-273.*

Here Swamiji gives an analysis of ancient Indian history which substantially agrees with impartial up-to-date reading. It was the Kshatriya rulers who used to check the pretensions of priesthood. With their disappearance, priest-craft allied itself with the new classes of rulers that sprang up after the downfall of Buddhism and began to exploit the masses.

The ancient history of India is full of descriptions of the

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gigantic energies and their multifarious workings, the boundless spirit, the combination of indomitable action and reaction of the various forces, and, above all, the profound thoughtfulness of a godly race.....

* * * * *

Whether this race slowly proceeded from Central Asia, Northern Europe, or the Arctic regions, and gradually came down and sanctified India by settling there at last, or whether the holy land of India was their original native place, we have no proper means of knowing now. Or whether a vast race living in or outside India, being displaced from its original abode, in conformity with natural laws, came in the course of time, to colonise and settle over Europe and other places. .....there is no sufficient ground to prove now, with the one exception of the fact of the kinship of Sanskrit with a few European languages. Similarly, it is not easy to arrive at a final conclusion as to the modern Indians,.....

* * * * *

But there is one fact to remember. Of that ancient Indian race, upon which the rays of civilisation first dawned,..... there are still found hundreds of thousands of its children, born of its mind—the inheritors of its thoughts and sentiments—ready to claim them.

Crossing over mountains, rivers and oceans, setting at naught, as it were, the obstacles of the distance of space and time, the blood of Indian thought has flowed, and is still flowing into the veins of other nations of the globe, whether in a distinct, or in some subtle unknown way. Perhaps to us belongs the major portion of that universal ancient inheritance.

* * * * *

But, as fire remains intact under cover of ashes, so the ancestral fire still remains latent in these modern Indians.

*Works: Vol. IV, Pp. 332-336.*

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Here, Swamiji speaks of the mighty antithetical struggles that have raged in Indian minds in quest of synthesis in society. He again alludes to the debatable controversy regarding the Aryans and their habitat. In this article Swamiji speaks of "Arya" in cultural sense. He asserts that Aryan mind has been inherited by the modern Indians by the process of spiritual descent. In this place, Swamiji differentiates somatic conception of a race from its cultural achievement. The U.N.E.S.C.O. has opined that there is no such thing as a race[1]. There are ethnic groups and their cultural achievements. The word *Aryan* is an ethnic-cultural designation. By "Indo-Aryan" we understand the mind developed by the section of Indo-Germanic-speaking people living in the Indian environment. There is no somatic characteristics attached to the nomenclature. In Sanskrit literature it has been used in cultural sense. The "Hindu" is not a race, but the designation has been imposed on them by the foreigners. The Indians have so long depreciated themselves by following the mirage created by foreign imperialist rulers. What Swamiji said long ago has been admitted by the latest impartial scientists.

> The people of Northern India are especially grateful to you of the South, as the great source to which most of the impulses that are working in India to-day can be traced..... The South had been the repository of Vedic learning,..... it is the Sruti still, that is the backbone of all the different divisions of the Hindu religion.
>
> * * * * *
>
> If one be asked to point out the system of thought towards which as a centre all the ancient and modern Indian thoughts have converged, if one wants to see the real backbone of Hinduism in all its various manifestations, the Sutras of Vyasa will unquestionably be pointed out as constituting all that.

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1. Vide Julian Huxley: "Race".

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Either one hears the Advaita-Kesari roaring in peals of thunder—.....to the poor despised Mehtar disciples of Lalguru, are different manifestations.

These three Prasthânas, then, in their different explanations as Dvaita, Visishtadvaita, or Advaita with a few minor recensions form the "authorities" of the Hindu religion. The Puranas, the modern representations of the ancient Nârâsamsi (Samhita portion of the Vedas) supply the mythology, and the Tantras, the modern representations of the Brahmanas (ritual portion of the Vedas), supply the ritual. Thus the three Prasthanas, as authorities, are common to all the sects; but as to the Puranas and Tantras, each sect has its own.

* * * * *

Of course, I do not pretend that all the Hindus are thoroughly acquainted with these sources of their religion. Many, especially in Lower Bengal, have not heard of the names of these sects and these great systems; but consciously or unconsciously, it is the plan laid down in the three Prasthanas, that they are all working out.

* * * * *

The influence of Sri Chaitanya is all over India.

* * * * *

In India religion was never shackled..... On the other hand, a fixed point was necessary to allow this infinite variation to religion, and society was chosen as that point in India. As a result, society became rigid and almost immovable. For liberty is the only condition of growth. On the other hand, in the West, the field of variation was society, and the constant point was religion. Conformity was the watchword, and even now is the watchword of European religion.... The result is a splendid social organisation, with a religion that never rose beyond the grossest materialistic conceptions.

* * * * *

In India, new circumstances at the same time are persis-

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tently demanding a new adjustment of social organisations. For the last three-quarters of a century, India has been bubbling over with reform societies and reformers. But alas, every one of them has proved a failure. They did not know the secret. .....Glory unto those noble and unselfish souls who have struggled and failed in their misdirected attempts. Those galvanic shocks of reformatory zeal were necessary to rouse the sleeping leviathan.—

*Works: Vol. IV, Pp. 278-293.*

Much of Vedic mythologies have been brought in the Puranas like Ramayana, Mahabharata and others and spun into long fantastic yarns. But the Puranas are divided into sectarian categories. Some of them extolling their own sects, some extolling the newly created Brahmans. Yet, all reach the Brahma-Sutras of Vadarayana as the highest authority. It is the sacred scripture of the Hindus down to the nineteenth century reformers. The Tantras which claim to supersede the previous scriptures are nothing but ritual exigences. But their claim to be descendants of the rites of the Brahmanas is a debatable one. It is claimed that the Buddhists first wrote the Tantras. Anyway, the Tantra is more liberal towards the Sudras and the foreigners.

Here Swamiji gives a description of the contents of different scriptures. He also contrasts the Indian and the Occidental society. In the West, the society is free to change itself. The religion is the pivot of social unity. But in India, religion is free i.e. a man is free to choose his own persuasion. But the society is the pivot of unity. But when society stagnates then comes the trouble. Hence, there has been constant attempts in India to reform the society through religion. But it has led to failures. A society has got an economic basis. Hence, its change has necessitated a revolution in every age of European countries.

Human society is in turn governed by the four castes—the priests, the soldiers, the traders and the labourers. Each state has its glories as well as its defects. When the

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priest (Brahmana) rules, there is a tremendous exclusiveness on hereditary grounds—the persons of the priests and their descendants are hemmed in with all sorts of safeguards—none but they have any knowledge—none but they have the right to impart that knowledge. Its glory is, that at this period is laid the foundation of sciences. The priests cultivate the mind, for through the mind they govern.

The military (Kshatriya) rule is tyrannical and cruel, but they are not exclusive, and during that period arts and social culture attain their height.

The commercial (Vaisya) rule comes next. It is awful in its silent crushing and blood-sucking power. Its advantage is, as the trader himself goes everywhere he is a good disseminator of ideas collected during the two previous states. They are still less exclusive than the military, but culture begins to decay.

Last will come the labourer (Shudra) rule. Its advantages will be the distribution of physical comforts—its disadvantages, (perhaps) the lowering of culture. There will be a great distribution of ordinary education, but extraordinary geniuses will be less and less.

If it is possible to form a state in which the knowledge of the priest period, the culture of the military, the distributive spirit of the commercial and the ideal of equality of the last can all be kept intact, minus their evils, it will be an ideal state. But is it possible?

Yet, the first three have had their day, now is the time for the last—they must have it—none can resist it. I do not know all the difficulties about the gold or silver standards (nobody seems to know much as to that), but this much I see that the gold standard has been making the poor poorer, and the rich richer. ....I am a *socialist* not because I think it is a perfect system, but half a loaf is better than no bread.

The other systems have been tried and found wanting. Let this one be tried—if for nothing else, for the novelty of the thing. A redistribution of pain and pleasure is

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better than always the same persons having pains and pleasures. The sum-total of good and evil in the world remains ever the same. The yoke will be lifted from shoulder to shoulder by new systems, that is all.

*Works: Vol. VI, Pp. 342-344.*

Here Swamiji gives an exposition of the development of human society. The historian H. G. Wells says that in ancient times, the priests were the first to rule. He calls them the temple-party. It is his interpretation of human social development after reading the histories of Mesopotamia and Egypt. But the present-day historians and the archaeologists opine differently. In recent books we read that each city in ancient Sumer had its own particular city-god whose temple was the chief building in the city. The god was regarded as the real ruler, and his human representative was the King[2]. Again, the archaeologist Horzny speaking about the civilization of Sumer and Akkad, says: The King or the prince was the vicar of the god on earth and ruled in his name. With the increase of his domination he used to anogate to himself the title of "god"[3]. Thus, the question of the priesthood rising as the ruling class in the beginning of civilization does not arise according to the latest investigation. The same is the case with Egypt. In the beginning each city-state had its own god. The ruler of the state called himself the vicar of God. Breated says, "The earliest priesthood was but an incidental in the duties of the local noble, who was the head of the priests in the community; but the exalted position of the Pharoah, as the nation developed, made him the sole official servant of the goods[4].

In Indian history we do not find the process of development as foretold by Swamiji and H. G. Wells. Of course, the latter

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2. Vide "World History" published by the United States Armed Forces Institute.
3. Vide Histoire De V Asie Anterieure: "De L' Inde et De La Crete" 1947.
4. Vide J. H. Brested: "A History of Egypt".

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has said that the Indo-Europeans have passed over that preliminary stage as portrayed by him when they entered history. But we have mentioned the stage of the more ancient peoples as reported by the modern investigators.

In India, like the other Indo-European peoples viz, the Greeks and the Romans, the Indo-Aryan king in the beginning was both a ruler, a priest and a judge. In India the king by power has preceded the priestly power. The Kshatriya always had been the ruler since the Rig-Vedic days. Priestly class came into power after the downfall of Maurya rule. And in defence of priestly rule the ancient Manu Samhita was expurgated and tampered with to suit the claims of the priesthood. According to Naroda-Smriti, Sumati Bhargava made the second revision of the Manu-text[5].

In this epistle Swamiji prophesies about the rule of the toiling masses whom he calls "Sudras" over future society and state. Again, in this epistle he boldly calls himself a *socialist.*

> The Smritis and the Puranas are productions of men of limited intelligence and are full of fallacies, errors, the feelings of class and malice. Only parts of them breathing broadness of spirit and love are acceptable, the rest are to be rejected. The Upanishads and the Gita are the true scriptures.... Ramanuja Sankara etc., seemed to have been mere Pundits with much narrowness of heart. Where is that love, that weeping heart at the sorrow of others?.....
>
> Another great discrepancy: the conviction is daily gaining on my mind that the idea of caste is the greatest dividing factor and the root of Maya—all caste either on the principle of birth or of merit is bondage.....
>
> Over and above, I come to see from my studies that the disciplines of religion are not for the Shudra: if he exercises any discrimination about food or about going out to foreign

5. Vide K. P. Jayaswal: "Age of Manu and Yagnavalkya".



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lands, it is all useless in his case, only so much labour lost. .....It is in the books written by priests that madnesses like that of caste are to be found, and not in books revealed from God.....

Another truth I have realised is that altruistic service only is religion, the rest, such as ceremonial observances, are madness—even it is wrong to hanker after one's own salvation.

*Works: Vol. VI, Pp. 354-355.*

That the Smritis and the Puranas betray the class-character of the priesthood is being gradually understood by the investigating scholars. The rules of the Smritis are applicable to Brahmans. For illustration, Manu interdicted flesh and fish-eating for the Brahman Brahmacharis. But the common people misunderstood it as applicable to all, though he allows meat and fish-eating! In the same way, he interdicted the eating of onion, garlic, sigru vegetable, etc. But the Brahmans of the South and North would eat raw onion yet discard garlic as unholy! Again, Kulluka Bhatta, the commentator of Manu has given the ruling that the Brahmans should not eat *sigru-vegetable* but the Sudras can eat it!

Again, since some of the Smriti-legislators have discountenanced widow-remarriage and divorce, those classes who are at the top follow the Brahmanical injunction and, regard them as "un-Hindu" acts. Yet, the Sudras outside Bengal practise it in consonance with the ancient legislators, viz., *Kautilya, Katyana, Narada, Parasara,* etc.

That altruistic service i.e. service to man is the religion, is being understood by the advanced mind of the West.

Krishna had opened the gates of spiritual knowledge and attainment to all irrespective of sex or caste, but he left undisturbed the same problem on the social side. This again has come down to our own days, in spite of the gigantic struggle of the Buddhists, Vaishnavas, etc., to attain to social equality for all.

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Modern India admits spiritual equality of all souls—but strictly keeps the social difference.

*Works: Vol. VI, P. 132.*

Swamiji is saying that the practice of observing equality in religious field only, did not help us in attaining social equality. The findings of those modern savants who advocate social equality is, that only on the basis of economic equality, social equality can be realized.

My brother, what experiences I have had in the South, of the upper classes torturing the lower! What Bacchanalian orgies within the temples! Is it a religion that fails to remove the misery of the poor and turn men into gods!—

*Works: Vol. VI, P. 224.*

It is clear from the reading of the history of the South, that owing to long political domination of the Brahman class, priest-craft got its full influence over the non-Brahman castes. Thus class-domination gave rise to the deplorable class-character known as the nation of 'untouchability'. Again, wherever there have been *devadasi* system in temples, those had been deplorable downfall of moral. Such an institution existed in ancient Asia-Minor and in the Mesopotamian valley countries

## NATIONAL SAYINGS

For the next fifty years this alone shall be our key-note —this, our great Mother India. Let all other vain Gods disappear for that time from our minds. This is the only God that is awake, our own race, everywhere His hands, everywhere His feet, everywhere His ears, He covers everything. All other Gods are sleeping. What vain Gods shall we go after and yet cannot worship the God

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that we see all round us, the Virat? .....The first of all worship is the worship of the Virat—of those all around us. Worship it. .....These are all our Gods—men and animals, and the first Gods we have to worship, instead of being jealous of each other and fighting each other.

*Works: Vol. III, Pp. 300-301.*

Swamiji visualises the motherland as the omnipresent (Virat) God. He wants India and her people to be the object of care for the time being, a fit object of worship during slavery. It has been the only program of nation-building during the period of antithesis that enshackled India had to pass through.

Do not be dragged away out of this Indian life; do not for a moment think that it would be better for India if all the Indians dressed, ate and behaved like another race ..... The Lord knows how many thousands of years are in your blood. Therefore, make way for the life-current of the nation. Take away the blocks that bar the way to the progress of this mighty river,.....and out it will rush by its own natural impulse, and the nation will go on careering and progressing.

These are the lines which I beg to suggest to you for spiritual work in India. There are many other great problems. .....For instance, there is the wonderful question of caste. .....The more I try to study it, the more I get bewildered. Still at last I find that a little glimmer of light is before me, I begin to feel its significance just now. Then there is the other great problem about eating and drinking. That is a great problem indeed. ....I have come to the conclusion that the insistence which we make now about eating and drinking, is most curious and is just going against what the Shastras required, that is to say, we come to grief by neglecting the proper purity of the food we eat and drink; we have lost the true spirit of it.

*Works: Vol. III, Pp. 382-393.*

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Here Swamiji warns the Indians against what the Japanese poet Noguche spoke in later days as "intoxication of the West". Swamiji speaks of cultural strain that is coursing in the veins of the Indians through hereditary succession from dim antiquity. On that strength Swamiji criticises the mentality prevalent amongst the rulers and the ruled of the time to make India into second England. But dialectical antithesis proved the contrary. Swadeshi movement swept away that illusion. It made India to stand on her own legs. It "resuscitated the Aryan in the Hindu".

Further, Swamiji asks the Indians to remove the hurdles that block the way of normal national current that has been flowing since the days of Rig-Veda. When Swamiji was vituperated and detracted for his "Unhindu" actions and sayings by the vested interests of conservation, he taking his stand on the past evolution of his ancestors, preached the policy of *Charaiveti* of Aitereya Brahmana of the Rig-Veda. He preached the "forward" policy of Indo-Aryan polity. The ignorant and hide-bound detractors of Swamiji did not understand it. But slowly and slowly India is unfolding herself as prophesied by Swamiji.

As regards the problems of eating and drinking—they are partly the left over of the remnants of primitive totemism accultured in Hinduism and partly social customs, partly hygienic. But the people take them as injunctions of religion.

> The Vedic priests base their superior strength on the knowledge of the sacrificial Mantras. .....The kings as well as their subjects are, therefore, looking up to these priests for their welfare during their earthly life. ..... Now commanding the king to be engaged in affairs fraught with death and ruin, now standing by him as his fastest friend with kind and wise counsels, now spreading the net of subtle, diplomatic statesmanship in which the king is easily caught,—the priest is seen, oftentimes, to make the royal power totally subservient to him.

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To protect the State, to meet the expenses of the personal comforts and luxuries of himself and his long retinue, and, above all, to fill to overflowing the coffers of the all-powerful priesthood for its propitiation, the king is continually draining the resources of his subjects, even as the sun sucks up moisture from the earth. His especial prey—his milch cows—are the Vaisyas.

Neither under the Hindu kings, nor under the Buddhist rule, do we find the common subjects-people take any part in expressing their voice in the affairs of the State. .....

The power of the populace is struggling to express itself in indirect and disorderly ways, without any method.

Is this due to want of proper laws?—no, that is not it. There are laws, there are methods, separately and distinctly assigned for the guidance of different departments of government;..... But, at the root of all, is the injunction of the *Rishi*[6] ....Under the circumstances, it is never possible for the people to acquire any sort of education, by which they can learn to combine among themselves and be united for the accomplishment of any object for the common good of the people.

Again, all those laws are in books. .....One Ramachandra is born after thousands of Agnivarnas pass away! Many kings show us the life of Chandasoka; Dharmasokas are rare! The number of kings like Akbar.....is far less than that of kings like Aurangzeb.

* * * *

....The voice of the ruled in the government,....cannot however be said to have been totally unrecognised in ancient India. ....And there cannot be the least doubt about it, that the germ of self-government was at least present in the shape of the village *Panchayat.* ....But the germ remained for ever the germ;.....

In the religious communities, among Sannyasins in the

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6. Here Swamiji hinted that State-craft and priest-craft united to exploit the people.

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Buddhist monasteries, we have ample evidence to show that self-government was fully developed. Even now, one wonders to see how the power of the *Panchayat* system, of the principles of self-government, is working amongst the *Naga* Sannyasins.....

With the deluge which swept the land by the advent of Buddhism, the priestly power fell into decay and the royal power was in the ascendant. .....The leaders of this age are no longer Visvamitra or Vasishtha, but emperors like Chandragupta, Dharmasoka and others. .....The end of this period is characterised by the appearance of Rajput power on the scene, and the rise of modern Hinduism.....

At this time, the Brahmanical (priestly) power again succeeded in raising its head, not as an adversary as before, but this time, as an auxiliary to the royal supremacy.

During this revolution, that perpetual struggle for supremacy between the priestly and the royal classes, which began from the Vedic times and continued through ages .....has ceased for ever. Now these two mighty powers are friendly to each other; but....each has lost his former intrinsic strength. As might be expected, this new union of the two forces was soon engaged in the satisfaction of mutual self-interests,....Being steeped in all the vices consequent on such a union, e.g., the sucking of the blood of the masses taking revenge on the enemy, spoliation of others' property, etc.,.....they soon became a cheap and ready prey to the Mohammedan invaders from the West.....

The resuscitation of the priestly power under the Mussalman rule, was, on the other hand, utter impossibility. .....

Thus the priestly power,—which sages like Kumarila, Sankara and Ramanuja tried to re-establish, which, for some time, was supported by the sword of the Rajput power, and tried to rebuild its structure on the fall of its Jain and Buddhist adversaries,—was, under Mohammedan rule, laid to sleep for ever, knowing no awakening. .....

In this manner,....royal power was echoed on the soil of India for several centuries, in the name of foreign

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monarchs professing an entirely different religion from the faith of the land. But at the end of this Muhammedan period, another entirely new power made its appearance on the arena. .....This power is so new, its nature and working are so foreign to the Indian mind,.....that..... only a handful of Indians understand what this power is. We are talking of the occupation of India by England..... That mighty newly-arisen Vaisya power,....is installed in all its grandeur, the majestic throne of England. Therefore, the conquest of India by England is not conquest by Jesus or the Bible,.....behind all these, there is always the virtual presence of England—that England, whose war-flag is the factory chimney, whose battle-fields are the market-places of the world,.....What new revolution will be effected in India by her clash with the new giant power, and as the result of that revolution what new transformation is in store for future India, cannot be inferred from her past history.

*Works: Vol. IV, Pp. 371-385.*

The Aryan and Semitic ideals of woman, have always been diametrically opposed. Amongst the Semites the presence of woman is considered dangerous to devotion and she may not perform any religious function, even such as the killing of a bird for food: According to the Aryan, a man cannot perform a religious action without a wife.

Modern Hinduism is largely Pauranika, that is, post-Buddhistic in origin. Dayananda Saraswati pointed out that though a wife is absolutely necessary in the Sacrifice of the domestic fire, which is a Vedic rite, she may not touch the *Shalagrama-Shila,* or the household-idol, because that dates from the latter period of the Puranas.

Circumstances have forced upon us, for many centuries, the woman's need of protection. This, and not her inferiority, is the true reading of our customs. .....

Women must be put in a position to solve their own problems in their own way. No one can or ought to do this

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for them. And our Indian women are capable of doing it as any in the world.

.....The Lord Buddha—greatest of men—was a marvellous organiser,..... But his religion was the religion of a monastic order. It had, therefore, the evil effect of making the very robe of the monk honoured. He also introduced for the first time the community life of religious houses and thereby necessarily made women inferior to men, since the great abbesses could take no important step without the advice of certain abbots....its far-reaching effects are to be deplored.....could anything be more complete than the equality of boys and girls in our old forest universities? Read our Sanskrit dramas—read the story of Shakuntala, and see if Tennyson's 'Princess' has anything to teach us!

*Works: Vol. V, Pp. 158-160.*

In Rig-Vedic days woman was not put in an inferior social position, though legally she was. The present-day position of woman in India is due to the antithesis that arose in the course of historical development. The preaching of monasticism amongst the Buddhists and the Vedantists may be partially held accountable for the degradation of Indian woman. Mighty Indian women have appeared in the society in the remote past and in modern time. They are awaiting economic emancipation for complete development of their self.

We have no wish to disparage the good work of the Theosophical or any other society. Yet exaggeration has been in the past the bane of our race,.....foolish depreciation is surely vicious, but fulsome praise is equally loathsome.....

This Indian drafting of American Spiritualism—with only a few Sanskrit words taking the place of spiritualistic jargon —Mahatma missiles taking the place of ghostly raps and taps, and Mahatmic inspiration that of obsession by ghosts....the Hindus have enough of religious teaching and teachers

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amidst themselves even in this Kali-Yuga, and they do not stand in need of dead ghosts of Russians and Americans.

Indian thought, charlatanry and mango-growing faquirism had all become identified in the minds of educated people in the West, and this was all the help rendered to Hindu religion by the Theosophists.

*Works: Vol. IV, Pp. 263-265.*

A true appraisal of Spiritualism and Theosophy. The bad effect of these misrepresentation in Occidental countries in the matter of evaluation of Hinduism is testified by the present-writer.

Give and take is the law, and if India wants to raise herself once more, it is absolutely necessary that she brings out her treasures and throw them broadcast among the nations of the earth, and in return be ready to receive what others have to give her. Expansion is life, contraction is death.

*Works: Vol. IV, Pp. 310-311.*

Each nation has a mission for the world. So long that mission is not hurt, the nation lives, despite every difficulty. But as soon as its mission is destroyed, the nation collapses.

Now, that vitality of India has not been touched yet. They have not given up that, and it is still strong—inspite of all their superstitions. Hideous superstitions are there, most revolting, some of them—never mind. The national life-current is still there—the mission of the race.

*Works: Vol. VIII, P. 75.*

My plan for India, as it has been developed and centralised, is this: I have told you of our lives as monks there, how we go from door to door, so that religion is brought to everybody without charge, except, perhaps, a broken piece of bread. That is why you see the lowest of the

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low in India holding the most exalted religious ideas. ..... It is a practical want of intellectual education about life on this earth they suffer from. .....They must have a better piece of bread and a better piece of rag on their bodies. The great question is, how to get that better bread and better rag for these sunken millions.....

Their instinct, however, is to plough. ....They never interfere with the religion of others. ....But that is not the case in India, where the poor fellows work hard from morning to sunset, and somebody else takes the bread out of their hands, and their children go hungry. .....He lives upon the poorest corn, which he would not feed to your canary birds.

Now there is no reason why they should suffer such distress.....Well then, my plans are, therefore, to reach these masses of India. Suppose you start schools all over India for the poor, still you cannot educate them. How can you? The boys of four years would better go to the plough or to work, than to your school. .....Why should not education go from door to door, say I. If a ploughman's boy cannot come to education, why not meet him at the plough, at the factory, just wherever he is? Go along with him, like his shadow. But there are these hundreds and thousands of monks, educating the people on the spiritual plane; why not let these men do the same work on the intellectual plane? Why should they not talk to the masses a little about history—about many things.....

Well, I must tell you that I am not a very great believer in monastic systems. They have great merits, and also great defects. There should be a perfect balance between the monastics and the householders. But monasticism has absorbed all power in India. .....What I mean to say is this, that it represents a tremendous power. What we can do is just to transform it, give it another form. This tremendous power in the hands of the roving Sannyasins of India has got to be transformed, and it will raise the masses up.

*Works: Vol. VIII, Pp. 85-90.*

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A few hundred modernised half educated and denationalised men are all the show of modern English India—*nothing else.* .....In spite of the centuries of anarchy that reigned during the struggles of the English to conquer, the terrible massacre the English perpetrated in 1857 and 1858 and the still more terrible famines that have become the inevitable consequence of British rule (there never is a famine in a native state) and that take off millions, there has been a good increase of population, but not yet what it was when the country was entirely independent—that is, before the Mohammedan rule. Indian labour and produce can support five times as many people as there are now in India with comfort, if the whole thing is not taken off from them.

This is the state of things—even education will no more be permitted to spread; freedom of the press stopped already, (of course we have been disarmed long ago) the bit of self-government granted to them for some years is being quickly taken off. We are watching what next! For writing a few words of innocent criticism men are being hurried to *transportation for life,* others imprisoned without *any trial;* and nobody knows when his head will be off.

There has been reign of terror in India for some years. English soldiers are killing our men and outraging our women—only to be sent home with passage and pension at our expense. We are in a *terrible* gloom—where is the Lord? Mary[7], you can afford to be optimistic, can I? Suppose you publish this letter—the law just passed in India will allow the English Government in India to drag me from here to India and kill me without trial. And I know all your Christian Government will only rejoice because we are heathens. Shall I also go to sleep and become optimistic? .....They don't think it worth while to write these terrible things as news items even! If necessary the news agent of *Reuter* gives the exactly opposite news fabricated to order! Heathen-murdering is only a

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7. The letter was addressed to *Miss Mary Hale.*

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legitimate pastime for the Chirstians! Your missionaries go to preach God and dare not speak a word of truth for fear of the English, who will kick them out the next day.

All property and land granted by the previous governments for supporting education have been swallowed up, and the present Government spends even less than Russia in education. And what education?

The least show of originality is throttled.....it is hopeless with us, unless there really is a God, who is the father of all, who is not afraid of the strong to protect the weak, and who is not bribed by wealth; is there such a God? Time will show.

*Works: Vol. VIII, Pp. 483-485.*

Here Swamiji communicates to an American friend of his what was happening in India under the aegis of British Imperialism in India of his time.

The secret of success of the Westerners is the power of organisation and combination. That is only possible with mutual trust and co-operation and help.

It is all right for those who have plenty of money and position to let the world roll on as such, but I call him traitor who, having been educated and nursed in luxury by the heart's blood of the down-trodden millions of the toiling poor, never even takes a thought for them. Where, in what period of history did your rich men and noble men, your priests and potentates take any thought for the poor—the grinding of whose faces is the very life-blood of their power?

Why amongst the poor of India are so many Mohammedans? It is nonsense to say they were converted by the sword. It was to gain their liberty from the.....zamindars and from the ...priests. And as a consequence you find in Bengal there are more Mohammedans than Hindus amongst the cultivators, because there were so many zamindars there. Who thinks of raising these sunken

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down-trodden millions? A few thousand graduates do not make a nation; a few rich men do not make a nation. Ninety per cent of our people are without education—who thinks of that?

*Works: Vol. VIII, Pp. 336-338.*

My mission in life is to rouse a struggle in you.

*Works: Vol. III, P. 442.*

....without mutual co-operation we can never make ourselves strong men.

*Works: Vol. III, P. 444.*

Co-operation is the basis of as advancement as said by Lester F. Ward[8] and Peter Kropotkin.[9] The latter said that the interested groups have distorted C. Darwin's theory of "Struggle for existence".

Aye, my friends, I must tell you a few harsh truths. I read in the newspapers, how when one of our poor fellows is murdered or ill-treated by an Englishman, howls go up all over the country; I read and I weep, and the next moment comes to my mind the question, who is responsible for it all? As a Vedantist I cannot but put that question to myself. The Hindu is a man of introspection, he wants to see things in and through himself, through the subjective vision. I therefore ask myself who is responsible, and the answer comes every time, not the English; no, they are not responsible for all our misery and all our degradation and we alone are responsible. Our aristocratic ancestors went on treading the common masses of our country under foot, till they became helpless, till under this torment the poor, poor people nearly forgot that they were human beings. They have been compelled to be merely hewers of wood and

8. Vide: "Applied Sociology ".
9. Vide: "Mutual Aid".

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drawers of water for centuries, so much so, that they are made to believe that they are born as slaves, born as hewers of wood and drawers of water. With all our boasted education of modern times, if anybody say a kind word for them, I often find our men shrink at once from the duty of lifting them up, these poor down-trodden people. Not only so, but I also find that all sorts of most demonical and brutal arguments, culled from the crude ideas of hereditary transmission, and other such gibberish from the Western world, are brought forward in order to brutalise and tyrannise over the poor, all the more.

*Works: Vol. III, Pp. 191-192.*

Here Swamiji is strongly emphasizing the historical fact which our present-day politicians are apt to forget, that the degradation and the enslavement of the Indian people has been wrought by those who have been in power in Indian society, when it developed the class system. The enslavement of the Indian people did not begin with the Battle of Tirouri and the Battle of Plassey, but the day when through class-struggle the people went down and the aristocratic class established a class state. Later on, the State and the Church by making a coalition began the exploitation of the Indian people which has resulted in the debasement of the people which Swamiji laments.

Swamiji himself has come to the same conclusion when he analysed the ancient Indian history.

Do you feel that millions and millions of the descendants of gods and of sages have become next-door neighbours to brutes? Do you feel that millions are starving today, and millions have been starving for ages? Do you feel that ignorance has come over the land as a dark cloud? Does it make you restless? Does it make you sleepless? Has it gone into your blood, coursing through your veins, becoming consonant with your heart-beats? Has it made you almost mad? Are you seized with that one idea of the misery of ruin, and have you forgotten all about your

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name, your fame, your wives, your children, your property, even your own bodies? Have you done that? That is the first step to become a patriot, the very first step.

*Works: Vol. III, Pp. 225-226.*

And that is what we want, no privilege for any one, equal chances for all; let every one be taught that the Divine is within, and every one will work out his own salvation.

*Works: Vol. III, P. 246.*

Here Swamiji wants democracy in social State.

Aye, in this country of ours, the very birthplace of the Vedanta, our masses have been hypnotised for ages.....To touch them is pollution, to sit with them is pollution! Hopeless they were born, hopeless they must remain! And the result is that they have been sinking, sinking, sinking, and have come to the last stage to which a human being can come. For what country is there in the world where man has to sleep with the cattle? And for this, blame nobody else, do not commit the mistake of the ignorant. The effect is here and the cause is here too. We are to blame. Stand up, be bold, and take the blame on your own shoulders. Do not go about throwing mud at others; for all the faults you suffer from, you are the sole and only cause.

*Works: Vol. III, P. 429.*

Swamiji is strongly pleading the case of the "submerged tenth" of the society. His is a strong rebuke to the Nationalists who lay the blame of India's degradation on the shoulders of others, yet turn a deaf ear to the cause of the sunken masses, and to whom patriotism means safeguarding the interests of their own class.

But since independence things are getting better.

But above all, let me once more remind you that here is

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need of practical work, and the first part of that is that you should go to the sinking millions of India, and take them by the hand.....

*Works: Vol. III, P. 433.*

You, young men of Bengal, do not look up to the rich and great men who have money. The poor did all the great and gigantic work of the world.....Many will follow your example, poor though you are. Be steady, and, above all, be pure and sincere to the back-bone. Have faith in your destiny. You, young men of Bengal, are to work out the salvation of India. Mark that whether you believe it or not. Do not think that it will be done today or to-morrow. I believe in it as I believe in my own body and my own soul. Therefore, my heart goes to you —young men of Bengal. It depends upon you who have no money; because you are poor, therefore you will work. Because you have nothing, therefore you will be sincere. Because you are sincere, you will be ready to renounce all. That is what I am just now telling you. Once more I repeat this to you. This is your mission in life, this is my mission in life. I do not care what philosophy you take up; only I am ready to prove here that throughout the whole of India, there runs a mutual and cordial string of eternal faith in the perfection of humanity, and I believe in it myself. And let that faith be spread over the whole land.

*Works: Vol. III, P. 445.*

Swamiji's advice to the youngmen of Bengal should be carefully considered by all Indian youth. He strongly urges them to wean themselves away from their petty-bourgeois mentality which makes them always look up to rich and great men for help and money. The finding of the youth in the history of Bengal is that the rich men did not open their purses when the former offered their lives at the altar of their motherland. It is the poor youth which do any work. This is the experience of history all over the world.



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It is right for you that you should serve your millions of brothers rather than agrandise this little self..... You must feel for the millions of beings around you.

*Works: Vol. III, Pp. 446-7.*

And to the Brahmins I say: "Vain is your pride of birth and ancestry. Shake it off.....If you are not bold enough to do that, then admit your weakness and stretch forth a helping hand and open the gates of knowledge to one and all, and give the down-trodden masses once more their just and legitimate rights and privileges".

*Works: Vol. III, P. 461.*

Swamiji is urging the youth of India to declass themselves by identifying with the downtrodden masses, and to restore to the latter their just and legitimate rights and privileges by leaving aside class-interest of their own.

Do you not see—taking up this plea of *Sattva,* the country has been slowly and slowly drowned in the ocean of Tamas, or dark ignorance? Where the most dull want to hide their stupidity by covering it with a false desire for the Highest Knowledge, which is beyond all activities, either physical or mental; where one, born and bred in life-long laziness, wants to throw the veil of renunciation over his own unfitness for work; where the most diabolical try to make their cruelty appear under the cloak of austerity, as a part of religion; where no one has an eye upon his own incapacity, but everyone is ready to lay the whole blame on others; where knowledge consists only in getting some books by heart, genius consists in chewing the cud of others' thoughts, and the highest glory consists in taking the name of ancestors: do we require any other proof to show that that country is being day by day drowned in utter Tamas?

*Works: Vol. IV, P. 338.*

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Swamiji criticises the slave-character of our people which we regard by mistake, as *Sattva, ergo,* as the highest embodiment of human virtue. He says that *Tamas* is slave-mentality; passivity of slave-mentality is not Sattva! Obeisant pettifogging and listless character of a slave do not come from Sattva. The defects and weakness of our character do not generate from *Sattva* and *Raja gunas,* but from the mentality of a hereditary slave!

And where are they through whose physical labour only are possible, the influence of the Brahman, the prowess of the Kshatriya and the fortune of the Vaisya? What is their history, who, being the real body of society, are designated, at all times, in all countries, as "base-born"? For whom kind India prescribed the mild punishments, "Cut out his tongue, chop off his flesh", and others of like nature, for such a grave offence as any attempt on their part to gain a share of the knowledge and wisdom monopolised by her higher classes—those "moving corpses" of India, and the "beasts of burden" of other countries—the Sudras, what is their lot in life? What shall I say of India? Let alone her Sudra class, her Brahmans, to whom belonged the acquisition of scriptural knowledge, are now the foreign professors, her Kshatriyas the ruling Englishman, and Vaisyas too, the English, in whose bone and marrow is the instinct of trade, so that, only the Sudra-ness—the-beast-of-burdenness—is now left with the Indians themselves.

A cloud of impenetrable darkness has at present equally enveloped us all. Now there is neither firmness of purpose nor boldness of enterprise, neither courage of heart, nor strength of mind, neither aversion to maltreatments by others, nor dislike for slavery, neither love in the heart, nor hope, nor manliness; but what we have in India are only deep-rooted envy and strong antipathy against one another, morbid desire to ruin by hook or by crook the weak, and dog-like to lick the feet of the

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strong. Now the highest satisfaction consists in the display of wealth and power, devotion in self-gratification, wisdom in the accumulation of transitory objects; Yoga in hideous diabolical practices, work in the slavery of others; civilisation in base imitation of foreign nations, eloquence in the use of abusive language, the merit of literature in extravagant flatteries of the rich, or in the diffusion of ghastly obscenities! What to speak separately of the distinct Sudra class of such a land, where the whole population has virtually come down to the level of the Sudra? The Sudras of countries other than India have become, it seems, a little awake; but they are wanting in proper education, and have only the mutual hatred of men of their own class—a trait common to Sudras. What avails it if they greatly out-number the other classes? That unity, by which ten men collect the strength of a million, is yet far away from the Sudra; hence, according to the law of nature, the Sudras invariably form the subject race.

*Works: Vol. IV, Pp. 399-401.*

Swamiji strongly pleads the case of the Sudra, now-a-days known as the *Proletariate.* He says that in ancient India, the laboring classes have been exploited and oppressed but as the result of this class-domination, nemesis has overtaken the upper classes. To-day the whole Indian people have been turned into Sudras! And as such, we have imbibed the character of the slaves and have developed slave mentality. In this page, he strongly depicts our slavish character and gives an analysis of it. As a result of slave-mentality, he says, we are given to extravagant flatteries of the rich! The evil effects of capitalism is to be discerned in our slave-mentality, yet we regard it as the normal condition of our life.

In the latter part, he speaks of the condition of the Proletariate of other lands as it existed when he was alive.

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Yet, a time will come when there will be the rising of the Sudra class, *with their Sudrahood;* that is to say, not like that as at present, when the Sudras are becoming great by acquiring the characteristic qualities of the Vaisya or the Kshatriya, but a time will come, when the Sudras of every country, with their inborn Sudra nature and habits,—not becoming in essence Vaisya or Kshatriya, but remaining as Sudras, —will gain absolute supremacy in every society. The first glow of the dawn of this new power has already begun to slowly break upon the Western world, and the thoughtful are at their wits' end to reflect upon the final issue of this fresh phenomenon. Socialism, Anarchism, Nihilism and other like sects, are the vanguard of the social revolution that is to follow.

*Works: Vol. IV, Pp. 401-2.*

Swamiji prophesises the uprise of the lowly—the rise of the world Proletariate. He clearly says that the Proletariate will come to power in every country. That has been the attempt of Karl Marx and his party ever since the Proletariate movement has been set on foot. Of course the Marxists say that the Proletariate in coming into power will not remain as Sudras, but by establishing a casteless and classless society will develop the higher nature of man in everybody. Swamiji here foreshadows the "Dictatorship of the Proletariate".

By reading the latter part of the pages it is clear that Swamiji was acquainted with the movement and literature of the Social-Revolutionaries of the West and he understood to which end the "Proletariate Movement" of the Occidental world was drifting, and the reaction made by it in the mind of the Capitalist class. Therefore he foretold the installation of the Proletariate in "Absolute Supremacy in every Society".

We have been slaves for ever, i.e., it has never been given to the masses in India to express the inner light which is their inheritance. The Occident has been rapidly advanc-

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ing towards freedom for the last few centuries. In India, it was the king who used to prescribe everything, from Kulinism down to what one should eat and one should not. In Western countries, the people do everything themselves.

The king now has nothing to say to any social matter; on the other hand, the Indian people have not yet even the least faith in themselves, what to say of self-reliance. The faith in one's own self, which is the basis of Vedanta, has not yet been even slightly carried into practice.

*Works: Vol. IV, P. 414.*

Swamiji emphasises the fact that has been said in the commentary of 'Anthropological Sayings' above, that the people of India have always been slaves i.e., they have been down-trodden, oppressed and exploited in every way. This historical fact is lost sight of by our political and social patriots. This has turned the Indian masses into human automaton to do the drudgery of slaves' works!

A hundred thousand men and women, fired with the zeal of holiness, fortified with eternal faith in the Lord, and nerved to lion's courage by their sympathy for the poor, the fallen and the down-trodden, should go over the length and breadth of the land, preaching the gospel of salvation, the gospel of help, the gospel of social raising-up,—the gospel of equality.

Trust not to the rich, they are more dead than alive. The hope lies in you—in the meek, the lowly, but the faithful.....

I bequeath to you, young men, this sympathy, this struggle for the poor, the ignorant, the oppressed.....Vow then to devote your whole lives to the cause of the redemption of these three hundred millions, going down and down every day.

*Works: Vol. IV, P. 180.*

In these epistles Swamiji is strongly appealing to the youth of the country to work for the salvation of the fallen masses.

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He warns the youth again and again not to look towards vested interests for support. He is pointing out the need of preaching the gospel of the social equality and of upliftment of the masses as a historical necessity. He says that a band of devoted youngmen with clear vision and with zeal for the realization of their ideal will work wonder.

In India there is a howling cry that we are very poor, but how many charitable associations are there for the well-being of the poor? How many people really weep for the sorrows and sufferings of millions of the poor in India? Are we *men?* What are we doing for their livelihood, for their improvement? We do not touch them, we avoid their company! Are we men? Those thousands of Brahmans—what are they doing for the low, down-trodden masses of India?

*Works: Vol. V, P. 23.*

Keep the motto before you—"Elevation of the masses without injuring the religion."

Remember that the nation lives in the cottage. But, alas! nobody ever did anything for them. Our modern reformers are very busy about widow remarriage. Of course, I am a sympathiser in every reform, but the fate of a nation does not depend upon the number of husbands their widows get, but upon the *condition of the masses.* Can you raise them? Can you give them back their lost individuality without making them lose their innate spiritual nature?

* * * * *

Can you put life into this dead mass—dead to almost all moral aspiration, dead to all future possibilities—and always ready to spring upon those that would try to do good to them?

* * * * *

Work among those youngmen who can devote heart and soul to this one duty—the duty of raising the masses of

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India. Awake them, unite them, and inspire them with this spirit of renunciation; it depends wholly on the young people of India.

* * * * *

The only hope of India is from the masses. The upper classes are physically and morally dead.

*Works: Vol. V, Pp. 25-26, 44, 64, 81.*

Swamiji analyses in a few words the true situation of the country, and gives the only remedy for it.

Now the question is, is it for the good of the public at large that social rules are framed, or society is formed? Many reply to this in the affirmative; some again may hold that it is not so. Some men, being comparatively powerful, slowly bring all others under their control and by stratagem, force or adroitness gain their own objects. If this be true, what can be the meaning of the statement that there is danger in giving liberty to the ignorant? What, again, is the meaning of liberty?

Liberty does not certainly mean the absence of obstacles in the path of misappropriation of wealth, etc., by you and me, but it is our natural right to be allowed to use our own body, intelligence or wealth according to our will, without doing any harm to others; and all the members of a society ought to have the same opportunity for obtaining wealth, education or knowledge. The second question is, those who say that if the ignorant and the poor be given liberty, i.e., full right to their body, wealth, etc., and if their children have the same opportunity to better their condition and acquire knowledge as those of the rich and the highly situated, they would become perverse—do they say this for the good of the society, or blinded by their selfishness? In England too I have heard, "Who will serve us if the lower classes get education?"

*Works: Vol. V, Pp. 109-110.*

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He is giving a crushing reply to the propertied classes for their selfish attitude towards the propertyless ones. He is criticising the "nationalism" of the Bourgeoisie to whom "liberty" means liberty to further their own interests. Here, he is delineating the process by which the Bourgeoisie of a country takes its rise, and depicting their mentality towards the exploited classes. Regarding this phase of society,[10] Swamiji is voicing the same historical fact as expressed by Prof. Veblen.

> A country where millions of people live on flowers of the *mohua* plant, and a million or two of Sadhus and a hundred million or so of Brahmins suck the blood out of these poor people, without even the least effort for their amelioration—is that a country or hell? Is that a religion, or the devil's dance?
>
> *Works: Vol. VI, Pp. 224-225.*

Swamiji is depicting the true facts of the society in these trenchant words. But it seems that there are more sadhus than he enumerated. Their number will go up to several millions. They are a problem with the National Government. The day is not far off when a radical tempered National Government will have to solve this problem in the same way as it is being tackled by the People's Government of China in the matter of the shaven-headed Bhikshus, the compeers of the shaven-headed sadhus of India.

Again, in this saying Swamiji is challenging in forceful terms the opinions of those who advocate passivity of life as the highest aim of human efforts. He is denouncing the exploitations that are going on in this country in the name of religion.

> What have we, several millions Sannyasins, been doing for the masses? Teaching them metaphysics! It is all

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10. Vide Prof. Veblen: "Theory of the Leisure Class".

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madness! It is a mockery to offer religion to a starving man. How can the millions rise, how can they be a power for good to society when they are starving?

*Life of Swami Vivekananda: Vol. IV, P. 177.*

Swamiji is again criticising the vagary of the vagrant wandering sadhus who coming from different religions must swell the number to several millions. They are busy with their efforts to attain Moksha (salvation) in the next world, while according to the old calculation of the patriot-leader Dadabhai Naoroji, the majority of the Indians on whom these drones of the society live, starve and semi-starve everyday! Again, he pleads for the starving millions. Swamiji in his wanderings over the country has seen the true state of affairs. These sayings are not political clap-trap to him.

We as a nation have lost our individuality, and that is the cause of all mischief in India. We have to give back to the nation its lost individuality and *raise the masses.* The Hindu, the Mahomedan, the Christian, all have trampled them under foot. Again, the force to raise them must come from inside.

*Life of Swami Vivekananda: Vol. IV, P. 177.*

Here, Swamiji clearly says that as the result of various sorts of oppressions and exploitations the soul of the Indian people have been smothered. Again, Swamiji is strongly urging the youth of India to carry on a vigorous propaganda for upliftment of the masses. His suggestions for this kind of work fall in line with the work of the Russian youth done before the rise of New Russia, and the work of the Chinese youth of the present generation.

You have been despising the lower classes of the country for a very long time and, as a result, you have now become the objects of contempt in the eyes of the world.

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* * * * *

Don't you perceive them? It is simply due to your having despised the masses of India that you have now been living a life of slavery for the last thousand years; it is therefore that you are objects of hatred in the eyes of foreigners and are looked upon with indifference by your countrymen.

*Works: Vol. VII, Pp. 170-171.*

Swamiji speaks of the nemesis that overtakes a people who enslave and exploit the greater part of their members for group interest. This is the verdict of history.

Alas! nobody thinks of the poor of the country. They are the backbone of the country, who by their labour are producing food—these poor people, the sweepers and labourers, who if they stop work for one day will create a panic in the town. But there is none to sympathise with them, none to console them in their misery.

*Works: Vol. VII, P. 244.*

However much you may parade your descent from Aryan ancestors and sing the glories of ancient India day and night, and however much you may be strutting in the pride of your birth, you, the upper classes of India,—do you think you are alive? You are but mummies ten thousand years old! It is among those whom your ancestors despised as "walking carrions" that the little of vitality there is still in India is to be found; and it is you who are the real "walking corpses". Your houses, your furniture look like museum specimens, so lifeless and antiquated they are; and even an eye-witness of your manners and customs, your movements and modes of life, is inclined to think he is listening to a grandmother's tale! When, even after making a personal acquaintance with you, one returns home, one seems to think one had been to visit the paintings in an art gallery! In this world of Maya, you are the real illusions, the mystery, the real

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mirage in the desert, you, the upper classes of India! You represent the past tense with all its varieties of form jumbled into one. That one still seems to see you at the present time, is nothing but a nightmare brought on by indigestion. You are the void, the unsubstantial nonentities of the future. Denizens of the dreamland, why are you loitering any longer? Fleshless and bloodless skeletons of the dead body of Past India that you are—why do you not quickly reduce yourselves into dust and disappear in the air? Aye, in your bony fingers are some priceless rings of jewel, treasured up by your ancestors, and within the embrace of your stinking corpses are preserved a good many ancient treasure-chests. Up to now you have not had the opportunity to hand them over. Now.....in these days of free education and enlightenment, pass them on to your heirs, aye, do it as quickly as you can. You merge yourselves in the void and disappear, and let New India arise in your place. Let her arise—out of the peasants' cottage, grasping the plough, out of the huts of the fisherman, the cobbler and the sweeper. Let her spring from the grocer's shop, from beside the oven of the fritter-seller. Let her emanate from the factory, from marts and from markets. Let her emerge from the groves and forests, from hills and mountains. These common people have suffered oppression for thousands of years—suffered it without murmur, and as a result have got wonderful fortitude. They have suffered eternal misery, which has given them unflinching vitality. Living on a handful of grain they can convulse the world;.....Skeletons of the Past, there, before you, are your successors, the India that is to be. Throw those treasure-chests of yours and those jwelled rings among them—as soon as you can; and you—vanish into air, and be seen no more—only keep your ears open. No sooner will you disappear than you will hear the inaugural shout of Renaissant India—ringing with the voice of a million thunders and reverberating throughout the universe.

*Works: Vol. VII, Pp. 308-310.*

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Swamiji gives a sociological analysis of the condition of the Indian Society. He says that the upper classes have outlived their time, their functions have ceased long ago. Today, they are the relics of the past, only a nightmare to haunt the present-day state of society. Swamiji admonishes them, because their presence in present-day body-politic of Indian Society confuses and hinders the normal evolution of the latter.

Later on, when he speaks of the rise of New India out of the huts and factories of the laboring classes he depicts the state of Future India as it ought to be. In this prophecy of his, he is in line with the "Proletocult" (Proletarian Culture) movement of the Russian Communists. The said movement is a movement of the spontaneous growth of the culture amongst the toiling class, which will be based on the psychology of the same group. This culture will represent the psychology of the Proletariate, and not of the Bourgeoisie. In India, the culture of the toiling masses which Swamiji prophesises will be the bond of union between all the varying sects and communities. And this "Proletocult" will create the New India. Swamiji here has anticipated the movement of the West by two decades.

> Just weigh the matter in your mind. Those uncared-for lower classes of India—the peasants and weavers and the rest, who have been conquered by foreigners and are looked down upon by their own people—it is they who from time immemorial have been working silently, without even getting the remuneration of their labours! But what great changes are taking place slowly, all over the world, in pursuance of nature's laws! Countries, civilisations and supremacy are undegoing revolutions. Ye labouring classes of India, as a result of your silent, constant labours Babylon, Persia, Alexandria, Greece, Rome, Venice, Genoa, Baghdad, Samarkand, Spain, Portugal, France, Denmark, Holland and England have successively attained supremacy and eminence! And you?—Well, who cares to think of you! My dear Swami,

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your ancestors wrote a few philosophical works, penned a dozen or so epics, or built a number of temples—that is all, and you rend the skies with triumphal shouts; while those whose heart's blood has contributed to all the progress that has been made in the world—well, who cares to praise them?.....ye ever-trampled labouring classes of India! I bow to you.

*Works: Vol. VII, Pp. 340-341.*

Swamiji is denouncing the class-character of civilization, and is saying that those who from time immemorial are working diligently and silently to produce the wealth of India, are uncared for by those who exploiting the labor of the same have been rolling in luxury! Swamiji here is giving a historical perspective that the production of the labor of these silent toilers has given rise to a brisk international trade between India and the outside world. This, in turn has enriched those countries he has mentioned. India's material prosperity and progress are due to the silent work of her mute laboring masses. But the class-spirit of those who are at the top of the social hierarchy prevents the truth to be manifested. The upper classes who have contributed nothing to India's material civilization appropriate to themselves the honor of being the originators of India's civilization. Here, he is hinting at the saying of Disraeli that two nations with diametrical interests, civilization and ideals live side by side in the same body-politic of a country! Finally, Swamiji pays his respect to the Indian toiling classes who as the producers of wealth have contributed to the progress of man's civilization.

Well, who on earth can vie with us (specially the Bengalees) as regards talking and discussing? Show it in action if you can. Let your work proclaim, and let the tongue rest. But let me mention one thing in passing, viz., that Europe began to advance from the date that learning and power began to flow in among the poor lower classes. Lots of suffering poor people of other countries,

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cast off like refuse as it were, find a house and shelter in America, and these are the very backbone of America! It matters little whether rich men and scholars listen to you, understand you, and praise or blame you—they are merely the ornaments, the decorations of the country! —It is the millions of poor lower class people who are its life. Numbers do not count, nor does wealth or poverty; a handful of men can throw the world off its hinges, provided they are united in thought, word and deed—never forget this conviction. The more opposition there is, the better.

*Works: Vol. VII, P. 354.*

Swamiji is criticising his own people which is still the fact! He says that "hurraing" for a few rich men and their hangers-on do not create any new thing. It is the work of the poor lower classes who are the backbone of a people that builds up any tangible thing. The Occidental countries started to advance from the day when democracy began to be realized in every-day life by the former unprivileged masses. Equalitarianism in all respects of life has been the key to the progress of those countries.

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## EDUCATIONAL SAYINGS

Teach the masses in the Vernaculars, give them ideas; they will get information, but something more is necessary; give them culture. Until you give them that there can be no permanence in the raised condition of the masses.

*Works: Vol. III, P. 291.*

The one thing that is at the root of all evils in India is the condition of the poor. The poor in the West are devils; com-

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pared to them ours are angels, and it is therefore so much the easier to raise our poor. The only service to be done for our lower classes is to give them education, *to develop their lost individuality*. That is the great task between our people and princes. Up to now nothing has been done in that direction. Priest-power and foreign conquest have trodden them down for centuries, and at last the poor of India have forgotten that they are human beings. They are to be given ideas; their eyes are to be opened to what is going on in the world around them, and then they will work out their own salvation. Every nation, every man and every woman must work out their own salvation. Give them ideas—that is the only help they require, and then the rest must follow as the effect.

*Works: Vol. IV, P. 308.*

Swamiji correctly compares the condition of the Western and Indian masses. The Indian masses being the inheritors of an ancient civilization and religious code are more humane and moral than their Occidental compeers.[1] On above grounds it is more easy to raise them. Therefore Swamiji pleads for the education of the masses, and to give them ideas and to open their eyes. Swamiji hits the nail on the head when he says, "We have to develop their lost individuality". This is the kernel of the Indian social question and this is the problem of the twentieth century. Compare the sayings of the Russian peasant delegates in All Russian Soviet Congress held in 1917 where they said, "We are dark peoples, we have been kept blind by the former regime, we cannot see anything, etc." Swamiji's description of the condition of the Indian masses did agree with that of the Russian masses; and what he advocated long ago for the upliftment of the masses of his own country is being applied in Russia. The result is that with the spread of education and infusion of new ideas, the Russian *moujik* is transforming himself into a new man.

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1. Vide: De Tocqueville's remarks on the character of the French masses.

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Now the question before us is this. There cannot be any growth without *liberty*. Our ancestors freed religious thought and we have a wonderful religion, but they put a heavy chain on the feet of society, and our society is in a word, horrid, *diabolical*. In the West, society always had freedom, and look at them. On the other hand, look at their religion.

Liberty is the first condition of growth. Just as man must have liberty to think and speak, so he must have liberty in food, dress and marriage and in every other thing, so long as he does not injure others.

*Works: Vol. IV, Pp. 312-313.*

Swamiji depicts the true condition of Indian society. He is clearly for the overthrow of the *status quo* of present moribund Indian society, and advocates social freedom.

We talk foolishly against material civilisation. The grapes are sour. Even taking all that foolishness for granted, in all India there are, say, a hundred thousand really spiritual men and women. Now, for the spiritualisation of these, must three hundred millions be sunk in savagery and starvation? Why should any starve? How was it possible for the Hindus to have been conquered by the Mohammedans? It was due to the Hindus' ignorance of material civilisation. Even the Mohammedans taught them to wear tailor-made clothes. Would the Hindus had learned from the Mohammedans how to eat in a cleanly way without mixing their food with the dust of the streets! Material civilization, may even luxury, is necessary to create work for the poor. Bread! Bread! I do not believe in a God who cannot give me bread here, giving me eternal bliss in heaven! Pooh! India is to be raised, the poor are to be fed, education is to be spread, and the evil of priestcraft is to be removed. No priestcraft, no social tyranny! More bread, more opportunity for everybody! Our young fools organize meetings to



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> get more power from the English. They only laugh. None deserves liberty who is not ready to give liberty. Suppose the English give over to you all the power. Why, the powers that be then, will hold the people down, and let them not have it. Slaves want power to make slaves.
>
> *Works: Vol. IV, P. 313.*

Those who maintain that Swamiji only talked of ancient Indian religion and of basing the Indian Society on that foundation take a note of what he has said previously. He was clearly for the overthrow of the present-day Indian social system and for abolition of religious and social exploitation. He stood for an all-round freedom of man. Here he has strongly emphasized the need of developing the material side of our civilization. Here also, he admits that "Economic interpretation of History" is the greatest motive factor in human society, therefore he speaks of "more bread, more opportunity for everybody". Also he exposes the class-character of patriotism of those who shout for liberty. "Slaves want power to make slaves" is a psychological truth, and is this not the mentality of our patriots?

> Where is that broad-hearted man who is apt to forget even his own body in meditating over the beauty and glory of the Divine? Those who are such are but a handful in comparison to the population of the whole of India; and in order that these men may attain to their salvation, will the millions and millions of men and women of India have to be crushed under the wheel of the present-day society and religion?
> And what good can come out of such a crushing?
>
> *Works: Vol. IV, P. 337-38.*

He criticises the action of those handful of men who for their own development will crush the major portion of their own people. Inversely he advocates the Marxian maxim—"greatest good to the largest number".

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Secondly, as I have written before, I do not expect anything from the rich people of India. It is best to work among the youth in whom lies our hope—patiently, steadily and without noise.

Now about work. From the day when education and culture, etc., began to spread gradually from patricians to plebeians, grew the distinction between the modern civilisation as of Western countries, and the ancient civilisation as of India, Egypt, Rome, etc. I see it before my eyes, a nation is advanced in proportion as education and intelligence spread among the masses. The chief cause of India's ruin has been the monopolising of the whole education and intelligence of the land, by dint of pride and royal authority, among a handful of men. If we are to rise again, we shall have to do it in the same way, i.e., by spreading education among the masses. A great fuss has been made for half a century about social reform. Travelling through various places of India these last ten years, I observed the country full of social reform associations. But I did not find one association for them by sucking whose blood the people known as "gentlemen," have become and continue to be gentlemen!

*Works: Vol. IV, P. 415.*

Swamiji again emphasises the fact that no good will come out of running after the rich people. He had his bitter experience in this matter.

Later, in a few words he sketches the development of education and culture in world's history. In ancient and feudal times education with its corollary culture, were confined amongst a selected few who were recruited generally from the affluent classes. The initiates of *Stoa* and *Academy* in Greece and of *Taxila* in India of ancient time were drawn from the wealthy classes. It is said that Brahmavidya was first confined in ancient India amongst the Kshatriyas—the ruling class. With the rise of monasticism, education became the monopoly of the monks,—again a selected group. The

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monks of Cluny and Clavireaux and of other cloisters in Europe, and of Nalanda, Vikramsila Sovnapuri and Jagaddal viharas and elsewhere in India, were the repositories of learning in Dark or Middle Ages of those lands. Only in quite modern time, education is becoming popular. The modern educationists and the sociologists are advocating compulsory education of all as the means of uplifting and advancing a people. Here, Swamiji is trenchant in his criticism of those who talk of saving the society and country yet will not go to the masses to uplift them in any way. By "India" our "gentlemen" think of their own class only! Swamiji is referring to these exploiters.

> Education, education, education alone! Travelling through many cities of Europe and observing in them the comforts and education of even the poor people, there was brought to my mind the state of our own poor people and I used to shed tears. What made the difference? Education was the answer I got. Through education, faith in one's own self, and through faith in one's own self the inherent Brahman is waking up in them, while the Brahman in us is gradually becoming dormant.
>
> *Works: Vol. IV, P. 416.*

> Let each one of us pray day and night for the downtrodden millions in India who are held fast by poverty, priestcraft and tyranny—pray day and night for them, I care more to preach religion to them than to the high and the rich. I am no metaphysician, no philosopher, nay, no saint. But I am poor, I love the poor. I see what they call the poor of this country, and how many there are who feel for them! What an immense difference in India! Who feels there for the two hundred millions of men and women sunken for ever in poverty and ignorance? Where is the way out? Who feels for them? They cannot find light or education. Who will bring the light to them—who will travel from door to

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door bringing education to them? Let these people be your God—think of them, work for them, pray for them incessantly—the Lord, will show you the way. Him I call a Mahatman (great soul) whose heart bleeds for the poor, otherwise he is a Duratman (wicked soul). Let us unite our wills in continued prayer for their good.

*Works: Vol. V, P. 45.*

In these epistles Swamiji is referring to the attitude of the social reformers. In his lifetime social reformation movement was most active in India. But this criticism can be applied to the present-day political reformers and revolutionists of latter days as well. All of them have been moving in a circle. To them, India means their own class or group, hence he is pointing out that "the nation lives in the cottages". It seems that he was the first public man to point out that the fate of the Indian nation depends upon the condition of its masses. His cry in this respect is the same as that of the social-revolutionaries of the West. He did not chew the cud of mid-Victorian ideologies, hence his opinions in this respect seem so similar to that of the twentieth century Occidental social-revolutionaries.

So long as the millions live in hunger and ignorance, I hold every man a traitor who, having been educated at their expense, pays not the least heed to them! I call those men who strut about in their finery, having got all their money by grinding the poor, wretches, so long as they do not do anything for those two hundred millions who are now no better than hungry savages!

*Works: Vol. V, P. 45.*

Swamiji is denouncing the propertied classes for their exploiting policies towards the poorer classes. He is denouncing the class-spirit of the capitalist and bourgeois classes who do nothing to those whom they exploit, and on whom they thrive!

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> For the luxury of a handful of the rich, let millions of men and women remain submerged in the hell of want and abysmal depth of ignorance, for if they get wealth and education, society will be upset!
> Who constitute society? The millions, or you, I, and a few others of the upper classes?
>
> *Works: Vol. V, P. 110.*

Swamiji defended the plea of the social-revolutionaries of his time.

> Intelligence must not remain the monopoly of the cultured few; it will be disseminated from higher to lower classes. Education is coming, and compulsory education will follow. The immense power of our people for work must be utilised. India's potentialities are great, and will be called forth.
>
> *Works: Vol. V, P. 129.*

Swamiji again is pleading the cause of *egalitarianism* in society.

> I consider that the great national sin is the neglect of the masses, and that is one of the causes of our downfall. No amount of politics would be of any avail until the masses in India are once more well educated, well fed, and well cared for. They pay for our education, they build our temples, but in return they get kicks. They are practically our slaves. If we want to regenerate India, we must work for them.
>
> *Works: Vol. V, P. 152.*

He is criticising the class-character of Indian politics. So long ago, he detected the true nature of Indian nationalist politics.

> The one problem you have is to give to the masses their rights. You have the greatest religion which the world

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ever saw, and you feed the masses with stuff and nonsense.

*Works: Vol. V, P. 153.*

Swamiji is clearly denouncing the exploiting policy of the upper strata of the Indian Society towards the masses. He says in different words that instead of humanising the masses with the help of their religion, the masses are being exploited and humbugged in everyway. Even religion has become a capitalist proposition. He is hinting at it.

The mass of people in our country is like the sleeping Leviathan. The education imparted by the present University system reaches to one or two per cent. of the masses only. And even those who get that, do not succeed in their endeavours of doing any good to their country.

Try to have their (masses) eyes opened as to what has taken place or is taking place in different countries, what this world is like, and so forth. You have got lots of poor and ignorant folk there. Go to their cottages, from door to door, in the evening, at noon, any time, and open their eyes.

Swamiji strongly urges the youth of India to carry on a vigorous propaganda for upliftment of the masses. His suggestions for this kind of work fall in line with the work of the Russian youth done before the rise of New Russia, and the work of the Chinese youth of the present generation.

There is some chance if you can impart education to the masses. Is there a greater strength than that of knowledge? Can you give them education? Name me the country where rich men ever helped anybody! In all countries it is the middle classes that do all great works. Teach some boys and girls of the peasant classes the rudiments of learning and infuse a number of ideas into

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their brains. Afterwards the peasants of each village will collect funds and have one of these in their village. उद्धरेदात्मनात्मानम् "One must raise oneself by one's own exertions"—this holds good in all spheres. We help them to help themselves. That they are supplying you with your daily bread, is a real bit of work done. The moment they will come to understand their own condition and feel the necessity of help and improvement, know that your work is taking effect and is in the right direction. While the little good that the moneyed classes, out of pity, do to the poor, does not last, and ultimately it does nothing but harm to both parties. The peasants and labouring classes are in a moribund condition, so what is needed is that the moneyed people will only help them to regain their vitality, and nothing more. Then leave the peasants and labourers to look to their own problem, to grapple with and solve it.

*Works: Vol. VI, Pp. 386-387.*

But know for certain that absolutely nothing can be done to improve the state of things, unless there is spread of education first among the women and the masses.

Ah, if even we shrink from working out the salvation of the sinful, the heavy leaden, the humiliated, and the afflicted in soul, who else are to take care of them in this world?

Long ago, when the talk about national question was a monopoly of a few of the elite of the society, Swamiji has given a practical program to the youth to raise the masses as the *sine qua non* of India's national advancement. But how many has hearken to it?

Everything requires to be changed a little according to place, time and civilisation.

*Works: Vol. VII, P. 131.*

* * * * *

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> And so the whole country has been plunged to the utmost depths of meanness, cowardice and ignorance. These men have to be uplifted; words of hope and faith have to be proclaimed to them. We have to tell them, "You are also men like us and you have all the rights that we have".

Swamiji is here delineating the mentality of the people as he saw them during his wide travel all over the country. Ages-long slavery engendered this character in the minds of the Indians about whom Megasthenes spoke so highly.

> The peasant, the shoemaker, the sweeper, and such other lower classes of India have much greater capacity for work and self-reliance than you. They have been silently working through long ages, and producing the entire wealth of the land, without a word of complaint. Very soon they will get above you in position. Gradually capital is drifting into their hands, and they are not so much troubled with wants as you are. Modern education has changed your fashion, but new avenues of wealth lie yet undiscovered for want of the inventive genius. You have so long oppressed these forbearing masses; now is the time for their retribution. And you will become extinct in your vain search for employment, making it the be-all and end-all of your life.
>
> *Works: Vol. VII, P. 146.*

Swamiji is speaking about the potentialities of the masses. Those who have identified themselves with the cause of the toiling masses of India and work with them, know it to be the truth.

Later, he prophesises about the future condition of the petty-bourgeois class which has already begun to take place.[2] The latter said that on account of the economic stress after the first world war, the poor middle class became gradually

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2. Vide K. Kautsky: "Proletarian Revolution".

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proletarianized! They became pay-earners, and some of them went down as wage-earners. Caste-distinction is preventing this class in India from being class-conscious as yet and to throw their lot openly with the Proletariate!

> Never mind if they have not read a few books like you—if they have not acquired your tailor-made civilisation. What do these matter? But they are the backbone of the nation in all countries. If these lower classes stop work, from where will you get your food and clothing? If the sweepers of Calcutta stop work a day, it creates a panic; and if they strike for three days, the whole town will be depopulated by the outbreak of epidemics. If the labourers stop work, your supply of food and clothes also stops. And you regard them as low-class people and vaunt your own culture!
>
> Engrossed in the struggle for existence, they had not the opportunity for the awakening of knowledge. They have worked so long uniformly like machines guided by human intelligence, and the clever educated section have taken substantial part of the fruits of their labour. In every country this has been the case. But times have changed. The lower classes are gradually awakening to this fact and making a united front against this, determined to exact their legitimate dues. The masses of Europe and America have been the first to awaken and have already begun the fight. Signs of this awakening have shown themselves in India, too, as is evident from the number of strikes among the lower classes now-a-days. The upper classes will no longer be able to repress the lower, try they ever so much. The well-being of the higher classes now lies in helping the lower to get their legitimate rights.
>
> Therefore I say, set yourselves to the task of spreading education among the masses. Tell them, and make them understand, "You are our brothers—a part and parcel of our bodies, and we love you and never hate you". If they receive this sympathy from you, their enthusiasm for work will be increased a hundredfold. Kindle their

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knowledge with the help of modern science. Teach them history, geography, science, literature, and along with these the profound truths of religion. In exchange for that teaching, the poverty of the teachers will also disappear. By mutual exchange both parties will become friendly to each other.

*Works: Vol. VII, Pp. 146-147.*

Be you my helpers in this work. Go from village to village, from one portion of the country to another, and preach this message of fearlessness to all, from the Brahmin to the Chandala. Tell each and all that infinite power resides within them, that they are sharers of immortal Bliss. Thus rouse up the Rajas within them—make them fit for the struggle for existence, and then speak to them about salvation. First make the people of the country stand on their legs by rousing their inner power, first let them learn to have good food and clothes and plenty of enjoyment—then tell them how to be free from this bondage of enjoyment.

Laziness, meanness and hypocrisy have covered the whole length and breadth of the country. Can an intelligent man look on all this and remain quiet? Does it not bring tears to the eyes?

*Works: Vol. VII, P. 180.*

Swamiji's exhortation to the youth of the country has not been heeded. On the contrary, the Bourgeois-Nationalists of the Indian National Congress though advocates mass education, yet have got peculiar way of their own. Their ideology garbled with Tolstoyanism, which in its last analysis is the vested interest of their class, makes them believe in *Ahimsa*. And that in a country full of *Tamas* generated by a thousand years of slavery. The Zakir Hussein Committee report drawn in Wardha in 1938, says, "As the Indian nation has adopted non-violence as the method for achieving all-round freedom, Indian children would need to be taught superiority of non-violence over violence (p. 8), that a simple

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outline of Indian history should be given.....and that emphasis should be laid on the ideals of love, truth and justice and on lessons drawn from life showing the superiority of truth and non-violence in all its phases and its concomitant virtues over violence and deceit". Dr. P. V. Kane in his presidential speech at the Indian History Congress, 1953, has criticized that "such a text-book be guilty of *suppressio veri* and *suggestio falsi*". Further, he says "I believe that no honest history can be written about Indian history based on the principles stated in the report referred to above, particularly for the period from about 1200 A.D. to 1920 A.D.

To-day, the powers that be, are starting basic educational schools on the basis of that ideal. There, the education centres around Spinning at the beginning. On this program, the fundamentals of Experimental Pedagogy is ignored. Party idealism in the name of basic education of the masses is being propagated. Thus, basic education is being officialized as the vehicle of party interest. Also, a false interpretation is being given of Indian civilisation. The spirit of Mahabharata, Ramayana, Gita, and Chandi are denied as if the ancient Indian seers and religious sages were inspired in their lives by Tolstoyanism imported from Russia, where it is unworkable. Swamiji has deplored this slave-mentality of the Indians.

---

## SAYINGS ON WOMEN

I have never seen women elsewhere as cultured and educated as they are here. Well-educated men there are in our country, but you will scarcely find anywhere women like those here. It is indeed true, that "the Goddess Herself lives in the houses of virtuous men as Lakshmi". I have seen thousands of women here whose hearts are as pure and stainless as snow. Oh, how free they are! It is they who control social and civic duties. Schools and

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colleges are full of women, and in our country women cannot be safely allowed to walk in the streets! Their kindness to me is immeasurable. Since I came here I have been welcomed by them to their houses. They are providing me with food, arranging for my lectures, taking me to market, and doing everything for my comfort and convenience. I shall never be able to repay in the least the deep debt of gratitude I owe to them.

Do you know who is the real "Shakti-worshipper"? It is he who knows that God is the Omnipresent Force in the universe, and sees in women the manifestation of the Force. Many men here look upon their women in this light. Manu, again, has said that gods bless those families where women are happy and well-treated. Here men treat their women as well as can be desired, and hence they are so prosperous, so learned, so free and so energetic. But why is it that we are slavish, miserable and dead? The answer is obvious.

And how pure and chaste are they here! Few women are married before twenty or twenty-five, and they are as free as the birds in the air. They go to market, school and college, earn money and do all kinds of work. Those who are well-to-do devote themselves to doing good to the poor. And what are we doing? We are very regular in marrying our girls at eleven years of age lest they should become corrupt and immoral. What does our Manu enjoin? "Daughters should be supported and educated with as much care and attention as the sons". As sons should be married after observing Brahmacharya up to the thirtieth year, so daughters also must observe Brahmacharya and be educated by their parents. But what are we actually doing? Can you better the condition of your women? Then there will be hope for your well-being. Otherwise you will remain as backward as you are now.

*Works: Vol. V, Pp. 21-23.*

Things are changing in India as well. In mediaeval Europe,

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girls used to be married in comparatively early ages. A queen of Denmark was married at the age of ten. The Black Prince of England was born when his mother was sixteen years of age!
In India the economic condition is changing the life of the present-day man and woman.

> What do I find in America and Europe?—the worship of Shakti, the worship of Power. Yet they worship Her ignorantly through sense-gratification. Imagine, then, what a lot of good they will achieve who will worship Her with all purity, in a *Sattvika* spirit, looking upon Her as their mother!
>
> *Works: Vol. VII, P. 417.*

> I now see it all. Brother, यत्र नार्यस्तु पूज्यन्ते रम्यन्ते तंत्र देवताः — "The gods are pleased where the women are held in esteem"—says the old Manu. We are horrible sinners, and our degradation is due to our calling women "despicable worms", "gateways to hell", and so forth. ....The Lord has said, त्वं स्त्री त्वं पुमानसि त्वं कुमार उत वा कुमारी —"Thou art the woman, Thou art the man, Thou art the boy and the girl as well". (*Shvetashwatara Upa.*) And we on our part are crying, दूरमपसर रे चण्डाल—"Be off, thou outcast!" केनैषा निर्मिता नारी मोहिनी etc.—"Who has made the bewitching woman"?
>
> *Works: Vol. VI, P. 224.*

Tribal custom ossified in feudal days degraded the status of woman in Indian society. When in post-Vedic days, some pleaded for equal right of inheritance between a son and a daughter, Yaska refuted it by referring to the Vedic custom (Nirukta). In present-day India women are competing with men in every sphere of life's activity. Economic change motivates change in society.

> Still on this sacred soil of India, this land of Sita and Savitri, among women may be found such character, such

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spirit of service, such affection, compassion, contentment and reverence, as I could not find anywhere else in the world! In the West, the women did not very often seem to me to be women at all, they appeared to be quite the replicas of men! Driving vehicles, drudging in offices, attending schools, doing professorial duties! In India alone the sight of feminine modesty and reserve soothes the eye! With such materials of great promise, you could not, alas work out their uplift! You did not try to infuse the light of knowledge into them! For if they get the right sort of education, they may well turn out to be the ideal women in the world.

*Works: Vol. VI, P. 446.*

Educate your women first and leave them to themselves; then they will tell you what reforms are necessary for them. In matters concerning them, who are you?

*Works: Vol. VI, P. 81.*

Liberty is the first condition of growth. It is wrong, a thousand times wrong, if any of you dares to say, "I will work out the salvation of this woman or child".....Hands off! They will solve their own problems.

*Works: Vol. III, P. 246.*

THOUGHTS ON MARRIAGEABLE AGE:

Once, Swamiji was asked about his opinion about early marriage. And he gave the following reply:

"Amongst the educated classes in Bengal, the custom of marrying their boys too early is dying out gradually. The girls are also given in marriage a year or two older than before, but that has been under compulsion—from pecuniary want. Whatever might be the reason for it, the age of marrying girls should be raised still higher..... The rulers passed the Age of Consent Bill prohibiting a man under the threat of penalty to live with a girl of twelve years, and at once all these so-called leaders of your religion raised a tremendous hue and cry against it,

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sounding the alarm, "Alas, our religion is lost"! As if religion consists in making a girl a mother at the age of twelve or thirteen!

Then the question was asked that in his opinion, both men and women should be married at an advanced age. Swamiji answered in the affirmative. He answered thus:

Certainly. But education should be imparted along with it, otherwise irregularity and corruption will ensue.....We want that education by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, the intellect is expanded, and by which one can stand on one's own feet.

Then the question was raised that we will have to reform our women in many ways. Swamiji answered:

With such an education women will solve their own problems. They have all the time been trained in helplessness, servile dependence on others, and so they are good only to weep their eyes out at the slightest approach of a mishap or danger. Along with other things they should acquire the spirit of valour and heroism. In the present day it has become necessary for them also to learn self-defence. See how grand was the Queen of Jhansi!

Then the question was raised that his advice was a quite new departure, and it would take a very long time yet to train our women in that way. Swamiji answered:

Anyhow, we have to try our best. We have not only to teach them but to teach ourselves also.

*Works: Vol. V, Pp. 256-259.*

In a question put to Swamiji whether he entirely satisfied with the position of women in Indian Society as existed then, he answered:

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By no means, but our right of interference is limited entirely to giving education. Women must be put in a position to solve their own problems in their own way. No one can or ought to do this for them. And our Indian women are as capable of doing it as any in the world.....

Again, could anything be more complete than the equality of boys and girls in our old forest universities? Read our Sanskrit dramas—read the story of Shakuntala, and see if Tennyson's 'Princess' has anything to teach us!

Then the question was asked whether our women have problems at all? Swamiji answered:

Of course, they have many and grave problems, but none that are not to be solved by that magic word 'education'. The true education, however, is not yet conceived of amongst us.

*Works: Vol. V, P. 161.*

Just as Swamiji wanted in his days, the Indian women of today are discussing problems of their own in conferences. They are taking part in social and national problems of their days. The age-limit for marriage has already been fixed by Sharda Act during the British regime. At present, a bill is in the anvil of the National Parliament covering the age-limit for marriage, inter-marriage and the right of inheritance in paternal property by the daughters. A sympathetic and liberal-minded government is sure to give economic emancipation of Indian women in every sphere of life. Willynilly, that is going to take place in near future.



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# APPENDIX

A few informations omitted while discussing about the "Family Pedigree" are inserted here. Our father while practising in Lahore in about 1876-77 instituted the Bengalee festival called *Saradiya Durgotsav* amongst the Bengalee colony for the first time. He took the leading part and bore a considerable part of expense in inaugurating the Bengal national religious festival there. The Pujah was performed in *ghat* (earthen jar) and in *pot* (picture). It seems that Bengalee image-makers were not available there at that time. Bisvanath wrote to our mother about it. From this it is clear that Bisvanath was liberal in his religious views. He respected the religion in which he was born, and honored the other persuations as well.

Again, we have talked of Swamiji's love for the country and of his ideal of "Mother India" that was similar with that of Bankimchandra as delineated in *Ananda Math* and in *Kamala Kanter Daptar*. The source of this trait is to be traced in early environmental factors. We have said that Swamiji used to frequent the *Hindu Mahamela* also called *National Mahamela* established by Nabagopal Mitra. We have also mentioned that the ladies of our family used to send hand-made articles as exhibits at the annual Mahamela. Sri Mahendranath throws some light on this matter of close association. Nabagopal Mitra belonged to the Thanthania Mitra family, and he was a grandson of the Simulia Datta family through a female line. On this account, Sri Mahendranath says, that on the occasion of social functions, the Mitras used to invite the Datta family, and he used to go to the Mitras' in response to the invitation.
Sri Mahendranath further says, that in that time, the influence of Nabagopal and that of Keshubchandra, was uppermost in the mind of the youth of the time. Naturally, Narendra fell under the influence of the both. Again, Sri Mahendranath says that Narendranath used to read assiduously the books of Bankimchandra. This is verified by the communication of Sri Hem-

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chandra Ghose published beforehand, that Swamiji told him and his associates to read "Bankimchandra and Bankimchandra".
Further, it is to be noted here, that the writer in his younger days found a copy of Jogendranath Vidyabhusan's *Atmotsargia Charitabali* (Lives of martyrs) and a torn copy of Bankimchandra's *Durgeshnandini* among the old books of family collection.
From all these evidences it is clear that Swamiji, while in his teens, was familiar with the patriotic Bengalee literature of the time. Thus, he imbibed positive patriotic feeling through the environment in which he moved.

Another information is to be given here. While Narendranath left his family for good, he deposited his musical instrument *Tamboura* (colloquial Tanpura) with our relative Dr. Ramchandra Datta who was then learning vocal music from an *ostad.* This fact was heard repeatedly by the author from his mother. Later on, when Ramchandra settled down as a *sebait* of the Ramakrishna Samadhi Mandir at his garden at Kakurgachi named *Yogodyan,* he took two tambouras with him to that place. The one was a very big one, made out of darkish-colored gourd, and the other was a smaller one and of brownish-color.
When the writer came of age and used to frequent the Yogodyan, he, seeing the bigger tamboura being used by Suresh (a disciple of Ramchandra) who was a musician, exclaimed, "This is my brother's tamboura". But Suresh and Kali (another disciple) both assured the writer, that the bigger one belonged to their *guru.* Hence, the smaller one must have belonged to Narendranath.
Sri Mahendranath says that Narendranath used to learn *pakhwaj* playing at Beni ostad's place. Hence, we never saw any pakhwaj of his at our place. Mahendranath further says, that the tamboura and the pakhwaj that are at the Belur Math, are the property of the Math. The writer has seen Swami Nirmalananda and Swami Saradananda playing and singing with those instruments.

Again, some mistakes have crept in the geneology as delineated in the text. The fifth child of our parents was a daughter who

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died in infancy. Thus Narendranath had four sisters and one brother preceding him. He was the sixth child of our parents. This has been corrected by Sri Mahendranath. Further, our younger uncle Taraknath had a son by his first wife. But the wife died when the child was a few months old. Our mother nursed the baby. But the baby died after some months of its birth. It was narrated by our mother, that when the baby was six months old, arrangement was made for *Annaprasana* ceremony. When Kaliprasad, the grand-father was entering the *Thakurghar* (deity-room) to perform *Nandimukh sraddha* as preparatory to Annaprasana, Taraknath then being a staunch Brahmo, intervened and objected to the performance of the sraddha. The child died sometime after that. He had six daughters by his second wife all of whom have passed away.

Another fact is to be mentioned here. When Narendranath became famous in the U. S. A. as Swami Vivekananda, Maharshi Devendranath Tagore, the *Pradhanacharya* of the Brahmo Samaj sent a congratulatory letter to the Datta family of 3, Gour Mohan Mukherjee Street, stating, that "one of the members of your family has become famous in America". We were then living in 7, Ramtanu Bose's Lane. The letter fell in the hands of our cousin, Amritalal Datta (Habu Babu) who at last confessed to Haramohan Mitra, that "not understanding the value of the letter, he has destroyed it in an absent-minded way".

Another seeming error has crept in the same chapter when some notable Dattas of the past have been enumerated. Late Nagendranath Vasu Prachya Vidyarnava has said, that it was Vyas Sinha who was cut into two by the king Vallalasena. At the same time the whole family of Jadav Datta i.e., he with his ten sons and seven grandsons were put to the sword by Vallalasena for not accepting Kulinism in Saka 1061=1139 A.D. Many of the Dattas and others fled to East Bengal after this holocaust (vide "Uttar-Rarhi Kayastha Kanda. P. 36).

Another error has crept inadvertently in P. 276: "Nabagopal *Ghose*" should be "Nabagopal *Mitra*".

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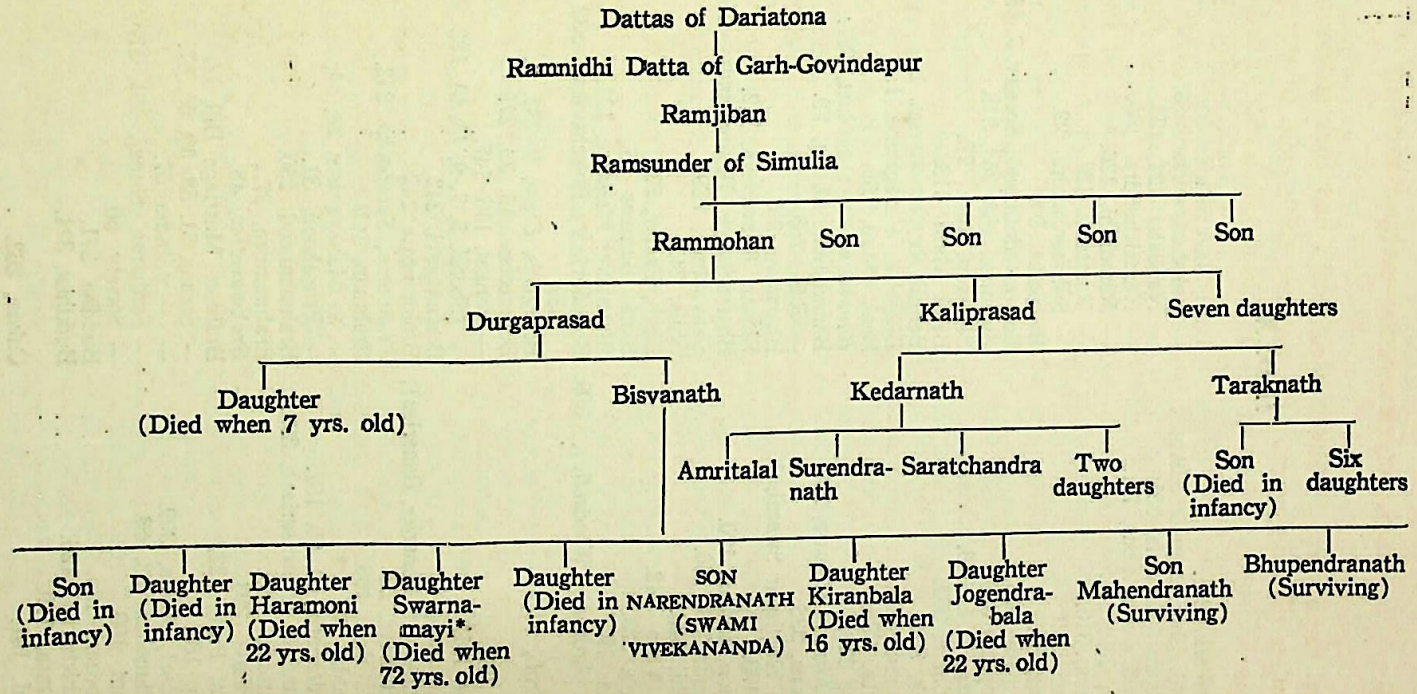
# GENEOLOGICAL TABLE




* Also called Swarnabala by the family, but in her documentary papers the above-mentioned name is found.

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*Cultural Books*:

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14. An Enquiry into Racial elements in Afghanistan, Baluchistan, and neighbouring lands of Hindukush (Translated from the German version of the Writer's dissertation for the doctorate, 1923 (In "Man in India", 1939, 1940).
15. The Ethnology of Central Asia and its bearing on India, (In "Man in India", 1942).
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18. The Origin of the Indo-Aryans (In "Hindusthan Review", Patna, 1948).

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19. Eine Untersuchung der Rassenelemente in "Balutschistan, Afghanistan und den Nachbarlandern des Hindukusch' (Hamburg, 1923), (published in a German Encyclopaedia of Science).
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1. On the formation of Indian Nationality (In "Calcutta Review", 1925).
2. Influence of French Thought on the Political Philosophy of Thomas Jefferson (In "Calcutta Review", 1925, Baccalaureate dissertation, New York University, 1912).
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8. Race or Backward People (In "Hindusthan Standard", Puja number, Calcutta, 1944).
9. Genesis of the National Flag (In "Hindusthan Standard", Calcutta, 1945).
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SWAM[illegible]DA, an apostle of Sri Ramakrishna Par[illegible]—Pre-monastic name Sri Narendranath Datta—Born January 12, 1863 at Calcutta—Father, Visvanath Datta, Attorny-at-law—Mother Bhubaneswari Devi—Younger brothers, Sri Mahendranath Datta and Dr. Bhupendranath Datta—First meeting with Sri Ramakrishna in 1881—Passed B. A. Examination in 1884—Father died in 1884—Sri Ramakrishna's Death in 1886—Travelled over the whole of India as a wandering monk from 1887-1893—First voyage to the West, visit to China and Japan and the Addresses in the Chicago Parliament of Religions in 1893—Preaching in U. S. A. in 1893-1896—Met distinguished American intellectuals—First visit to England and acquainted with Sister Nivedita and other disciples in 1895—Met prominant personalities of Europe—Started for India—On the way visit to France and Italy in 1896—Founded Ramakrishna Mission in 1897—Second voyage to America and Europe in 1899—Addresses given in the Paris Exhibition in 1900 and returned to India, on the way visit to Egypt, Greece, Turkey and other neighbouring countries—Visited Bodh Gaya, Sarnath, Banaras with Sister Nivedita, Okakura and others in 1901—Died on July 4, 1902 at Belur Math.

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